DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 098 RC 020 884

AUTHOR Wimberley, Ronald C.; Morris, Libby V.
TITLE The Reference Book on Regional Well-Being: U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, Appalachia.
INSTITUTION Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State, Miss.
SPONS AGENCY Extension Service (DOA), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Nov 96
CONTRACT 93-ERRD-1-8502
NOTE 182p.; Some figures may not reproduce adequately.
PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Population Trends; *Blacks; Census Figures; *Demography; Dropouts; Educational Attainment; Geographic Regions; Metropolitan Areas; Nonmetropolitan Areas; Poverty; Quality of Life; *Regional Characteristics; *Social Indicators; Tables (Data); Unemployment; *Well Being; *Whites
IDENTIFIERS African Americans; *Appalachia; Dependency (Economics); *United States (South)

ABSTRACT

This reports analyzes 1990 census data on populations, race, rurality, poverty, education, unemployment, and economic dependence for the Northeast, Midwest, West, and South. Special emphasis is placed on the South, its subregion the Black Belt, and Appalachia. The Black Belt region encompasses 623 counties in 11 southern states; these counties are characterized by a higher-than-average percentage of African American residents. Appalachia consists of 404 counties in 11 states. Tables and figures present socioeconomic data that indicate regional concentrations of various types of socioeconomic distress. Over half of the southern population and nearly a fifth of U.S. residents live in the Black Belt. The percentage of people who are poor is notably higher in the South. This trend is intensified in the Black Belt counties, where the poverty rate is the highest in the country and where poverty rates are highest for African Americans, metro and nonmetro residents, and nonmetro Blacks. The highest rate of individuals not completing high school occurs in the Black Belt, with Appalachia and the South following. Although unemployment rates for the South and Black Belt are about the same as those for other regions, Black and nonmetro Black unemployment rates are worse than those of other racial groups in every region and subregion. Additionally, nonmetro dependence ratios run higher than metro ratios, and African American dependence ratios are higher than those for Whites. Specifically, the data indicate that poverty and high school graduation rates are worse in the South and Black Belt where nonmetro Black dependence rates are especially high. To sum up, the South and Black Belt are home to nonmetro and racial subpopulations that suffer the worst rates on socioeconomic indicators, and these rates and the large size of at-risk subpopulations interact to produce disproportionately large concentrations of poor quality-of-life conditions in the South and Black Belt. Contains 20 references and numerous data tables and figures. (LP)

ED 403 098

THE REFERENCE BOOK ON REGIONAL WELL-BEING

U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, Appalachia

Ronald C. Wimberley
Libby V. Morris

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H. D. Bradmax

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Published by
SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Box 9656
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 020884

This material is based upon work supported by the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture under Agreement Number 93-ERRD-1-8502.

THE REFERENCE BOOK ON REGIONAL WELL-BEING

U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, Appalachia

Ronald C. Wimberley
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
North Carolina State University

Libby V. Morris
The Institute of Higher Education
The University of Georgia

This research is supported in part by CSREES Regional Research Project S-246 on, "The Transformation of Agriculture: Technology, Natural Resources, and Policy Implications," and in part by a grant from the Southern Rural Development Center on "The Black Belt of the Rural South: Dependence, Persistence, and Policy." Additional support was provided through the Agricultural Research Service of North Carolina State University and through the Institute of Higher Education of the University of Georgia. The authors appreciate this support and are responsible for the content of this analysis.

Copyright ©1996 by Ronald C. Wimberley and Libby V. Morris.

For Further Information

This analysis is one of a series of studies on rural and community socioeconomic, health, and environmental conditions in the South and other regions of the United States. For further information about this research program, maps, data, or analyses, contact:

The Southern Black Belt Consortium

Ronald C. Wimberley, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-8107
(919) 515-7431
Fax (919) 515-2610

or

Libby V. Morris, Ph.D.
The Institute of Higher Education
The University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602-1772
(706) 542-3464
Fax (706) 542-7588

Table of Contents

		Page
For Further Information		ii
Table of Contents		iii
Lists of Maps, Figures, and Tables		iv
Overview		ix
Preface and Acknowledgments		xi
Part I.	Introduction	1
Part II.	The Demographic Context of Quality of Life Subpopulations Within Regions Shares Across Regions	9
Part III.	Poverty Poverty Rates Within Regions Shares of Poverty Across Regions	35
Part IV.	Education Rates of Not Graduating From High School, Within Regions Shares of Those Not Graduating, Across Regions	51
Part V.	Unemployment Unemployment Rates Within Regions Shares of Unemployment Across Regions	67
Part VI.	Dependence U.S. and Regional Dependence Ratios Percentages of Elders and Youths Within Regions Shares of Elders and Youths Across Regions	85
Part VII.	Conclusions	115
References		119

List of Maps, Tables, and Figures

		Page
Maps		
Map 1.	U.S. Census Regions	4
Map 2.	Black Belt States and Counties	5
Map 3.	Appalachian States and Counties	6
Tables		
Table 1.	Populations, Within the U.S. and Regions	11
Table 2.	Urban and Rural Populations by Metro and Nonmetro Residence, Within the U.S. and Regions	13
Table 3.	Metro and Nonmetro Populations by Urban and Rural Residence, Within the U.S. and Regions	15
Table 4.	Populations, Across Regions	21
Table 5.	Urban and Rural Populations by Metro and Nonmetro Residence, Across Regions	27
Table 6.	Metro and Nonmetro Populations by Urban and Rural Residence, Across Regions	29
Table 7.	People in Poverty, Within the U.S. and Regions	37
Table 8	People in Poverty, Across Regions	43
Table 9.	People Ages 25 and Older Who Are Not High School Graduates, Within the U.S. and Regions	53
Table 10.	People Ages 25 and Older Who Are Not High School Graduates, Across Regions	59

		Page
Table 11.	Unemployed People Ages 16 and Older, Within the U.S. and Regions	71
Table 12.	Unemployed People Ages 16 and Older, Across Regions	77
Table 13.	Numbers and Ratios of Total, Elder, and Youth Age-Dependents, Within the U.S. and Regions	87
	Metro Dependence Ratios	88
	Nonmetro Dependence Ratios	89
Table 14.	Total, Elder, and Youth Age-Dependents, Within the U.S. and Regions	97
	Metro Age-Dependents, Within Regions	98
	Nonmetro Age-Dependents, Within Regions	99
Table 15.	Total, Elder, and Youth Age-Dependents, Across Regions	105
	Metro Age-Dependents Across Regions	106
	Nonmetro Age-Dependents Across Regions	107

Figures

Figure 1.	Subpopulations Within U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia	17
Figure 2.	U.S. Population Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	23
Figure 3.	Portions of U.S. Population Across Major Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia	24
Figure 4.	White and Black Populations Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	25
Figure 5.	Urban and Rural Populations Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	31

		Page
Figure 6.	Metro and Nonmetro Populations Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	32
Figure 7.	Nonmetro White and Black Populations Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	33
Figure 8.	Poverty Within U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia	39
Figure 9.	Poverty Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	45
Figure 10.	White and Black Poverty Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	46
Figure 11.	Metro and Nonmetro Poverty Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	47
Figure 12.	Nonmetro Whites and Blacks in Poverty Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	48
Figure 13.	Poverty Across the Black Belt and Appalachia	49
Figure 14.	Percent Not Graduating From High School Within the U.S. Regions, Black Belt, and Appalachia	55
Figure 15.	People Not Graduating From High School Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	61
Figure 16.	Whites and Blacks Not Graduating From High School Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	62
Figure 17.	Metro and Nonmetro Residents Not Graduating From High School Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	63
Figure 18.	Nonmetro Whites and Blacks Not Graduating From High School Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	64

		Page
Figure 19.	People Not Graduating From High School Across the Black Belt and Appalachia	65
Figure 20.	Percent Unemployed Within U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia	73
Figure 21.	Unemployment Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	79
Figure 22.	White and Black Unemployment Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	80
Figure 23.	Metro and Nonmetro Unemployment Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	81
Figure 24.	Nonmetro White and Black Unemployment Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	82
Figure 25.	Unemployment Across the Black Belt and Appalachia	83
Figure 26.	Age-Dependence Ratios for U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia	91
Figure 27.	African-American Age-Dependence Ratios for U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia	92
Figure 28.	Nonmetro Age-Dependence Ratios for U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia	93
Figure 29.	Nonmetro, African-American Age-Dependence Ratios for U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia	94
Figure 30.	Percent of Elder Dependents Within the U.S., Black Belt, and Appalachia	101
Figure 31.	Percent of Youth Dependents Within the U.S., Black Belt, and Appalachia	102

		Page
Figure 32.	Age-Dependents Across the South, Black Belt, and Appalachia	109
Figure 33.	Black Age-Dependents Across the South, Black Belt, and Appalachia	110
Figure 34.	Nonmetro Age-Dependents Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	111
Figure 35.	Nonmetro White and Black Age-Dependents Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions	112
Figure 36.	Elder and Youth Dependence Across the Black Belt and Appalachia	113

Overview

Adapted from
The Southern Black Belt: Dependence, Quality of Life, and Policy
(Wimberley and Morris 1997)
and
The Southern Black Belt in National Perspective
(Wimberley, Morris, and Bachtel 1996)

A century ago, Booker T. Washington wrote of the Black Belt: "The term seems to be used wholly in a political sense—that is, to designate the counties where the black people outnumber the white."

Today, the Southern Black Belt remains a social and demographic crescent of counties containing higher than average percentages of black residents. The region stretches through parts of Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas.

The Southern Black Belt stands in contrast to the rest of the country. Though 12 percent—30 million people—in the United States are African-Americans, about half live in the South. A map of counties that are 12, 25, and 40 percent or more black shows that nearly all the counties are southern and nearly all are rural.

The historic Black Belt's conditions remain some of the worst in our nation. The Black Belt is home to persistent poverty, poor employment, low incomes, limited education, poor health, high infant mortality, and dependence.

Our findings show some of the special conditions—poverty, low levels of education, and unemployment—affecting the contemporary South and Black Belt. We map these circumstances and describe them statistically. We also introduce a neglected but important factor—dependence—to the equation for socioeconomic well-being in addition to the education, employment, and rurality factors commonly used to explain poor conditions.

The analysis reveals an extraordinary correspondence of the patterns of poor quality of life and the largely nonmetropolitan, Black Belt South. The greater southern region holds far more of the nation's poor and people who have not completed high school than are found in the Northeast, the Midwest, or the West.

Within the South, it is the Black Belt's 623 counties that contain most of the larger region's poor conditions and low standings in quality of life. By itself, the Black Belt includes more poverty than either of the other three major regions of our nation. And, there is more poverty in the Black Belt—black or white—than in the area served by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Dependence in the nonmetropolitan Black Belt is exceptionally high, especially for black youth. Dependence is considered so high that—without human services to support economic opportunities—rural development is severely restricted.

To improve quality of life for those in the Black Belt is a major challenge to each of the Black Belt's people, places, and states and to the region nation of which the Black Belt represents a major part. The Black Belt and its people deserve a well-researched, systematic, and comprehensive regional strategy for change.

Ronald C. Wimberley
Libby V. Morris

January 1995

Preface and Acknowledgments

This volume accompanies a separate monograph, *The Southern Black Belt: Dependence, Quality of Life, and Policy* (Wimberley and Morris 1997) and a map and poster, *The Southern Black Belt in National Perspective* (Wimberley, Morris, and Bachtel 1996). The present volume contains additional textual, statistical, and graphic information on the conditions of the Black Belt, the larger South, and—in comparative context—the Appalachia, the Northeast, Midwest, West, and the United States as a whole.

We appreciate information and encouragement from Douglas C. Bachtel who worked with us on earlier, related data and studies. We thank Donna Hughes, Thomas Overton, Peg Brant, and Jack Fulton who assisted in data processing and analysis and to Judy Cline who worked with the production of the report. Thanks especially to Ruth Heuer who assisted in the census data processing from mainframe to micro through many types of software and who provided expertise in the many activities this type of analysis involves.

We also appreciate the early contribution of the STF-3C census tapes from the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. We transformed these raw census data into a SAS dataset used in much of this analysis. We appreciate Ntam Baharanyi's review and suggestions for the final draft and thank the Southern Rural Development Center and its staff for handling the final review and printing. Many others have given encouragement and help along the way, and we are grateful for their contributions as well. The authors, of course, are responsible for the analysis and interpretations expressed here.

Part I.
Introduction

The story of impoverishment in the United States is a story of region, race, and rurality.

The South is a region with a special history. The contemporary South is also the largest region of the United States and is the nation's largest rural region. Unfortunately, however, the South and its Black Belt have far more than their just shares of the nation's poor conditions.

When poor quality of life is studied, it seems that the large, historic South becomes invisible although its people, places, and impoverishment represent the major part of the nation. It is not that other regions lack problems. They do not, and quality-of-life issues should be dealt with anywhere, wherever they are. But the impoverishment of the South and Black Belt are of such magnitude that if quality of life in the South and Black Belt did improve, it would substantially improve the well-being of the nation as a whole.

A region within the South, the historic Black Belt consists of 623 counties that have higher than average concentrations of African-American population. That includes nearly one of every five U.S. counties. The Black Belt counties have at least the national average of 12 percent black residents. The Black Belt, a concept used at the turn of the century by Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, lies in a large crescent of southern geography running through parts of the 11 Old South, or Black Belt, states of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas.

Living conditions of particular interest in this analysis are poverty, low levels of education, unemployment, and dependence. These conditions are of special concern for rural as well as the urban areas. We shall examine these quality-of-life indicators nationally; for the Northeast, Midwest, West, and South with emphasis on the South; and with added emphasis on the Black Belt and Appalachia.

The major emphasis in this report is numerical and percentage data along with selected graphics not fully reported in *The Southern Black Belt* (Wimberley and Morris 1997). Additional data are presented here and, in some cases, with interpretations beyond the scope of the accompanying volume. The detail of the tables and graphs presented here also contain implications beyond those

highlighted in the present text. Furthermore, the numerical data in the tables can be used to calculate still further findings for special needs.

Maps focusing on the Black Belt South. Maps of U.S. counties showing nonmetropolitan areas, poverty, the lack of high school graduation, unemployment, and dependence are shown in *The Southern Black Belt* and are not reproduced here. We note, however, that these maps highlight Black Belt states and counties that rate poorly in poverty, education, unemployment, and dependence. In the maps of that volume, many counties in these 11 states—the Black Belt counties and otherwise—are shaded to indicate that their socioeconomic quality of life ranks in the worst or second-worst quartiles for the entire United States. The unfortunate overrepresentation of poverty, low educational attainment, unemployment, and dependence in the counties of the Black Belt and many other places in the South deserves special attention.

Percentages looking both ways, within and across. In the tables to be shown, percentages will be presented in two ways. In one, we examine the percentage of people in the Black Belt, South, Northeast, Midwest, West, Appalachia, and in the total United States who suffer the impoverished conditions at issue. These percentages within the nation and each of its regions represent conventional rates of poverty, high school graduation, unemployment, and the like.

Percentage rates are important, but it is also important to know where those having a lower socioeconomic quality of life are located. Therefore, the second and often neglected way of calculating percentages on poor quality-of-life conditions is to look at how regional, percentage shares of the subpopulations compare across the country. The relative concentrations or percentage shares of these conditions from one region to the next have been largely overlooked in studies of quality of life in general and rural poverty in particular. However, these percentage shares show contrasts across regions that will be emphasized here beyond what can be learned from the rates customarily reported by other research.

In brief, there are two ways to look at quality-of-life percentages. One is to look at a condition's percentage rates within each region. The other is to compare the percentage shares across regions. Rates do not tell the whole story. Shares help to tell the rest. In particular, the numerical and percentage shares of poor conditions across locations make the circumstances of the South—and its Black Belt—even more visible than do the percentage rates by themselves.

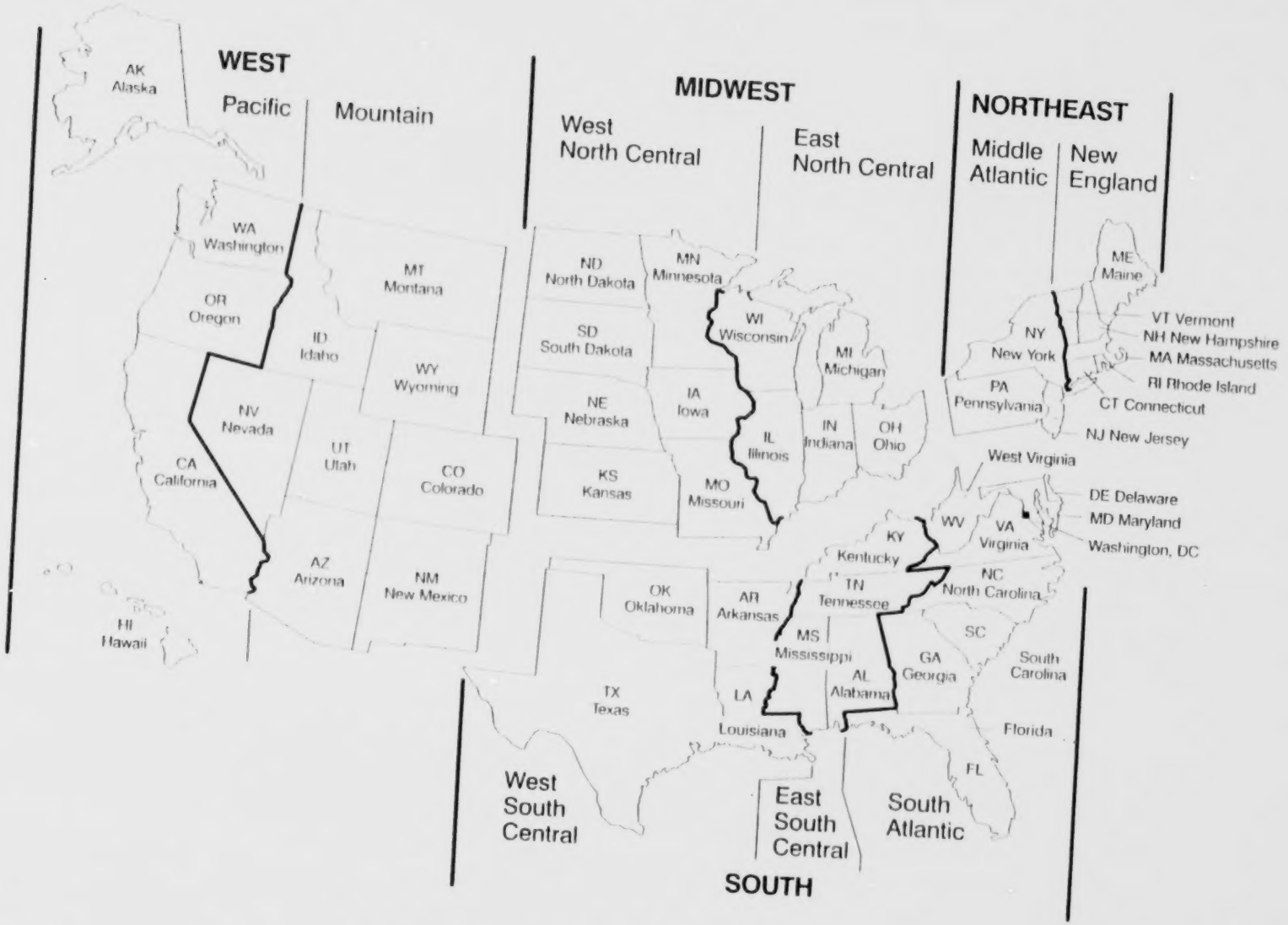
In the analyses to follow on population, poverty, education, unemployment, and dependence, the conventional rates within the United States and its regions will be presented first, and then the shares across regions will be presented to better establish where the disproportionate amounts of each socioeconomic problem exist.

Regions. The four major U.S. regions to be analyzed—the South, Northeast, Midwest, and West—are those defined and reported by the U.S. Census. The South contains 16 states and Washington, D.C. The states are Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware (Map 1).

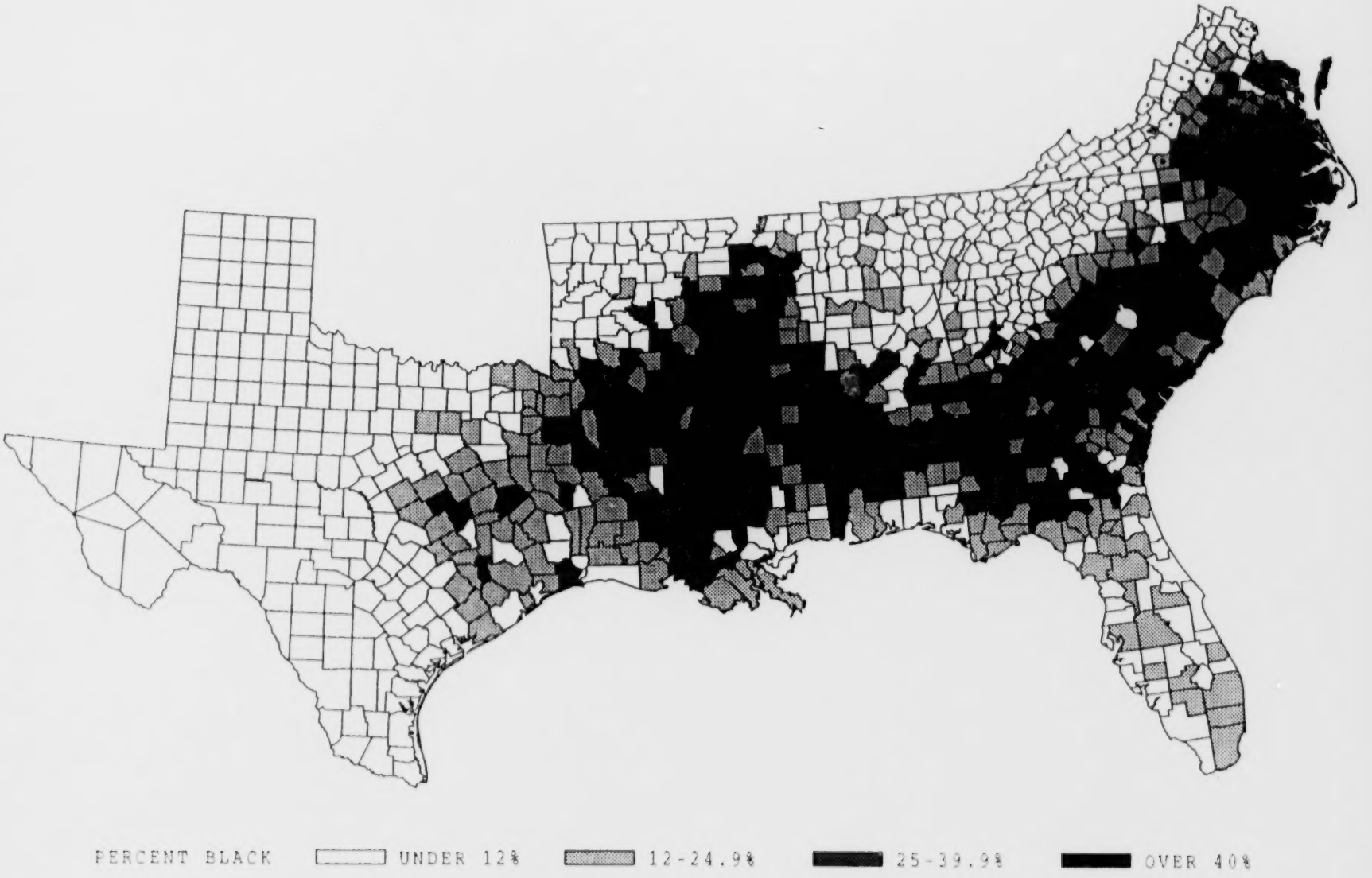
The Northeast has nine states and consists of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. The 12 midwestern states are Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas. The 13-state West covers New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Within the southern region are the 11 states noted earlier that contain the Black Belt subregion. The 623 Black Belt counties form a fairly contiguous expanse across these 11, Old South states. The Black Belt is not majority black but characterized by the higher-than-average percentages of African-Americans living there. The map shows the 11 Black Belt states and their 623 Black Belt counties at 12, 25, and 40 percent levels of African-American population (Map 2). Since 12 percent is the African-American percentage of the United States, 12 percent sets the threshold of population concentration used to identify the contemporary Black Belt.

Although all of the Black Belt counties are in the 11 Black Belt states and in the South, another subregion spans 404 counties across the eastern United States including parts of the Northeast, a few midwestern counties in Ohio, and much of the mountain South. This is Appalachia (Map 3). Its 13 states are New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. From these states, the counties served by the Appalachian Regional Commission are designated as Appalachia.



Map 1. U.S. Census Regions
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



Map 2. Black Belt States and Counties

Compiled by R. C. Wimberley and L. V. Morris from 1990 U.S. Census.

Map 3. Appalachian States and Counties
Compiled by R. C. Wimberley and L. V. Morris.

A somewhat irregular bulge of 47 counties in southern Appalachia—18 in Alabama and 17 in Mississippi plus 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee—are also Black Belt counties. Therefore, comparisons of Appalachia with the South, Northeast, or Midwest as well as with the Black Belt are not altogether mutually exclusive. This should be kept in mind especially when comparing Appalachia with the Black Belt in the tables and figures. Due to the geographical and demographic overlap between these subregions, differences between the Black Belt and Appalachia are even greater than the statistics and graphics suggest.

Rurality. Rurality is a generic concept with many meanings. Rurality includes dimensions of spatial distance, small or sparse populations, social interaction patterns, cultural distinctions, occupational characteristics, and quality of life (Wimberley 1995). As in most statistical analyses for the United States, the concept is used here in the demographic sense.

One way the Bureau of the Census (1992a, 1995) identifies rurality is through rural and urban population counts. Urban places are normally incorporated and have at least 2,500 residents; places that are not urban are rural. The census also measures rurality in terms of the nonmetropolitan, or nonmetro, population. Basically, a metropolitan, or metro, county contains a central city of at least 50,000 people plus any adjacent counties that are closely integrated socially and economically with the central county (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1995: 4). Counties not officially designated as metro are nonmetro.

Although similar, rural and nonmetro populations do not entirely correspond. There can be rural populations in metro counties and urban populations in nonmetro counties.

Most of our analysis will rely upon the metro/nonmetro classification of counties to measure rurality. In Part II of this report, the section on regional demographics, we also provide the urban and rural counts of the metro and nonmetro populations in order to show the association between the two types of measures. Except for several further uses of the Census' rural counts, however, we otherwise use the term, rural, as a generic concept.

The metro and nonmetro county information reported here is not the same as that reported in the 1990 census publications but is based on OMB's 1993 update (Office of Management and Budget 1993). In our recalculations of

metro and nonmetro populations from the 1990 census data, counties having any metro population in them are classified as entirely metro.

Data sources. Other than the OMB designations of metro and nonmetro areas, the data to be analyzed in this report are from the 1990 U.S. Census of Population as provided by the Bureau of the Census in printed and electronic files. Where available, data are taken from the whole-census counts in the STF-1 CD-ROMS. For variables collected only from the 1990 census subsample that received the longform questionnaires, a SAS dataset of the STF-3C tape is used.

Part II.
The Demographic Context of Quality of Life

Subpopulations Within Regions

The demographic composition of U.S. regions differs according to race and rurality.

Race. Racially, the Midwest leads with an 87 percent white population (Table 1; Figure 1). Second is the Northeast with 83 percent, followed by the South at 77 percent, and the West with 76 percent white. African-Americans range from only 5 percent of the West to 19 percent of the South. In the Midwest and Northeast, they are 10 and 11 percent respectively.

Rurality. The South and Midwest have the highest rates of rural and nonmetro populations. The South surpasses all major regions with a 31 percent rural population and pushes ahead of the 28 percent rural rate for the Midwest (Table 2).

The densely populated Northeast is 79 percent urban (Table 2; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1995: 43) and 91 percent metropolitan (Table 3). Yet the most sparsely populated region, the West, is the most urban region at 86 percent and is the second most metropolitan region at 86 percent as well. At 27 and 26 percent nonmetro, the South and Midwest have about double the nonmetro rate of the West and about triple that of the Northeast (Table 3).

The nonmetro Northeast and Midwest are almost completely white at 97 and 96 percent respectively (Table 1). The nonmetro West with 85 percent and the nonmetro South with 79 percent have proportionately fewer whites. However, the nonmetro South is 18 percent black while the nonmetro areas of the other major regions each have less than 2 percent black.

The Black Belt and Appalachia. The Black Belt is 27 percent African-American and 69 percent white. The Black Belt, therefore, is less white and more black than the larger South or, for that matter, any region. The Black Belt's population resembles the South in being about three-fourths metro and one-fourth nonmetro. However, one-third of the nonmetro Black Belt is black.

Appalachia is almost entirely white. In fact, it is 92 percent white. Its 7 percent black population is due mainly to the 48 southern counties Appalachia

shares in common with the Black Belt. Being 53 percent rural and 42 percent nonmetro, Appalachia has higher rates of rural and nonmetro populations than the Black Belt or any major region. Appalachia's nonmetro population—the rural "people left behind" that were highlighted in the war on poverty during the 1960s and 1970s and the target of the Appalachian Regional Commission today—is 94 percent white.

While the demographic rates of race, region, and rurality show interesting variations, all regions are not of the same demographic size. Rates do not show this. Shares of population across regions do. And where high rates combine with larger populations of one type or another, such places become the worst places for quality-of-life conditions in the United States. These places, we recommend, should be targeted for research, policies, and development programs.

Table 1. Populations, Within the U.S. and Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Total	White	Black	Metro	Nonmetro	Nonmetro White	Nonmetro Black
U.S.	%	100.0%	80.3%[c]	12.1%	79.8%	20.2%	87.1%	8.7%
(3,141)	N	248,709,873	199,686,070	29,986,060	198,582,657	50,127,216	43,682,458	4,352,231
	Base[b]	248,709,873	248,709,873	248,709,873	248,709,873	248,709,873	50,127,216	50,127,216
Northeast	%	100.0%	82.8%	11.0%	91.1%	8.9%	97.3%	1.5%
(217)	N	50,809,229	42,068,904	5,613,222	46,293,640	4,515,589	4,392,615	67,401
	Base	50,809,229	50,809,229	50,809,229	50,809,229	50,809,229	4,515,589	4,515,589
Midwest	%	100.0%	87.2%	9.6%	73.3%	26.7%	96.4%	1.5%
(1,055)	N	59,668,632	52,017,957	5,715,940	43,710,195	15,958,437	15,391,840	245,523
	Base	59,668,632	59,668,632	59,668,632	59,668,632	59,668,632	15,958,437	15,958,437
West	%	100.0%	75.8%	5.4%	86.2%	13.8%	85.2%	0.9%
(444)	N	52,786,082	40,017,010	2,828,010	45,487,222	7,298,860	6,220,578	68,091
	Base	52,786,082	52,786,082	52,786,082	52,786,082	52,786,082	7,298,860	7,298,860
South	%	100.0%	76.8%	18.5%[c]	73.8%	26.2%	79.1%	17.8%
(1,425)	N	85,445,930	65,582,199	15,828,888	63,091,600	22,354,330	17,677,425	3,971,216
	Base	85,445,930	85,445,930	85,445,930	85,445,930	85,445,930	22,354,330	22,354,330
Black Belt	%	100.0%	69.2%	26.7%	76.9%	23.1%[c]	65.3%	32.8%
(623)	N	45,250,315	31,331,093	12,088,640	34,785,145	10,465,170	6,836,893	3,434,581
	Base	45,250,315	45,250,315	45,250,315	45,250,315	45,250,315	10,465,170	10,465,170
Appalachia	%	100.0%	91.8%	7.3%	58.3%	41.7%	94.3%	4.8%
(404)	N	20,701,881	18,994,316	1,508,096	12,075,980	8,625,901	8,137,168	417,233
	Base	20,701,881	20,701,881	20,701,881	20,701,881	20,701,881	8,625,901	8,625,901

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 1 (also see Figure 1):

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

Percentages and numbers for white and black, metro and nonmetro, and nonmetro white and nonmetro black in this, "...Within the U.S. and Regions," table sum across the rows.

White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

[b]The bases, or denominators for the percentages, are the total numbers of people in the U.S., each region, or each designated subpopulation.

[c]Interpret as follows: 80.3 percent of the U.S. population is white; 18.5 percent of those living in the South are black; 23.1 percent of those living in the Black Belt are nonmetro; etc.

Table 2. Urban and Rural Populations by Metro and Nonmetro Residence, Within the U.S. and Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Urban			Rural		
		Total Urban	Metro	Nonmetro	Total Rural	Metro	Nonmetro
U.S.	%	75.2%[c]	90.3%	9.7%	24.8%	48.2%	51.8%
(3,141)	N	187,051,543	157,349,368	18,171,061	61,658,330	29,702,175	31,956,155
	Base[b]	248,709,873	187,051,543	187,051,543	248,709,873	61,658,330	61,658,330
Northeast	%	78.9%	96.8%	3.2%	21.1%	69.7%	30.3%
(217)	N	40,094,568	32,629,425	1,266,071	10,714,661	7,465,143	3,249,518
	Base	50,809,229	40,094,568	40,094,568	50,809,229	10,714,661	10,714,661
Midwest	%	71.7%	96.8%	3.2%	28.3%	40.9%	59.1%
(1,055)	N	42,770,360	35,861,525	5,969,000	16,898,272	6,908,835	9,989,437
	Base	59,668,632	42,770,360	42,770,360	59,668,632	16,898,272	16,898,272
West	%	86.3%	92.1%	7.9%	13.7%	48.8%	51.2%
(444)	N	45,529,779	41,948,365	3,581,414	7,256,303	3,538,857	3,717,446
	Base	52,786,082	45,529,779	45,529,779	52,786,082	7,256,303	7,256,303
South	%	68.6%	89.5%	12.5%	31.4%	44.0%[c]	56.0%
(1,425)	N	58,656,836	51,302,260	7,354,576	26,789,094	11,789,340	14,999,754
	Base	85,445,930	58,656,836	58,656,836	85,445,930	26,789,094	26,789,094
Black Belt	%	73.1%	89.2%	10.8%	29.3%	43.3%	56.7%[c]
(623)	N	33,099,959	29,521,537	3,578,422	12,150,356	5,263,608	6,886,748
	Base	45,250,315	33,099,959	33,099,959	45,250,315	12,150,356	12,150,356
Appalachia	%	47.4%	78.3%	21.7%	52.6%	40.3%	59.7%
(404)	N	9,815,750	7,684,628	2,131,122	10,886,131	4,391,352	6,494,779
	Base	20,701,881	9,815,750	9,815,750	20,701,881	10,886,131	10,886,131

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 2:

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

Percentages and numbers for urban and rural sections of the table sum to the total U.S. population. Subcategories for metro and nonmetro sum across rows in their respective urban and rural sections of the table.

[b]The bases, or denominators for the percentages, are the total numbers of people in the U.S., each region, or each designated subpopulation.

[c]Interpret as follows: 75.2 percent of the U.S. population is urban; 21.1 percent of those living in the Northeast are rural; in the rural South, 44.0 percent are metro residents; in the rural Black Belt, 56.7 percent are nonmetro residents; etc.

Table 3. Metro and Nonmetro Populations by Urban and Rural Residence, Within the U.S. and Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Metro			Nonmetro		
		Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
U.S.	%	79.8%[c]	85.0%	15.0%	20.2%	36.3%	63.8%
(3,141)	N	198,582,657	168,880,482	29,702,175	50,127,216	18,171,061	31,956,155
	Base[b]	248,709,873	198,582,657	198,582,657	248,709,873	50,127,216	50,127,216
Northeast	%	91.1%	83.9%	16.1%	8.9%	28.0%	72.0%
(217)	N	46,293,640	38,828,497	7,465,143	4,515,589	1,266,071	3,249,518
	Base	50,809,229	46,293,640	46,293,640	50,809,229	4,515,589	4,515,589
Midwest	%	73.3%	84.2%	15.8%	26.7%	37.4%	62.6%
(1,055)	N	43,710,195	36,801,360	6,908,835	15,958,437	5,969,000	9,989,437
	Base	59,668,632	43,710,195	43,710,195	59,668,632	15,958,437	15,958,437
West	%	86.2%	92.2%	7.8%	13.8%	49.1%	50.9%
(444)	N	45,487,222	41,948,365	3,538,857	7,298,860	3,581,414	3,717,446
	Base	52,786,082	45,487,222	45,487,222	52,786,082	7,298,860	7,298,860
South	%	73.8%	81.3%	18.7%[c]	26.2%	32.9%	67.1%
(1,425)	N	63,091,600	51,302,260	11,789,340	22,354,330	7,354,576	14,999,754
	Base	85,445,930	63,091,600	63,091,600	85,445,930	22,354,330	22,354,330
Black Belt	%	76.9%	84.9%	15.1%	23.1%	34.2%	65.8%[c]
(623)	N	34,785,145	29,521,537	5,263,608	10,465,170	3,578,422	6,886,748
	Base	45,250,315	34,785,145	34,785,145	45,250,315	10,465,170	10,465,170
Appalachia	%	58.3%	63.6%	36.4%	41.7%	24.7%	75.3%
(404)	N	12,075,980	7,684,628	4,391,352	8,625,901	2,131,122	6,494,779
	Base	20,701,881	12,075,980	12,075,980	20,701,881	8,625,901	8,625,901

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 3:

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

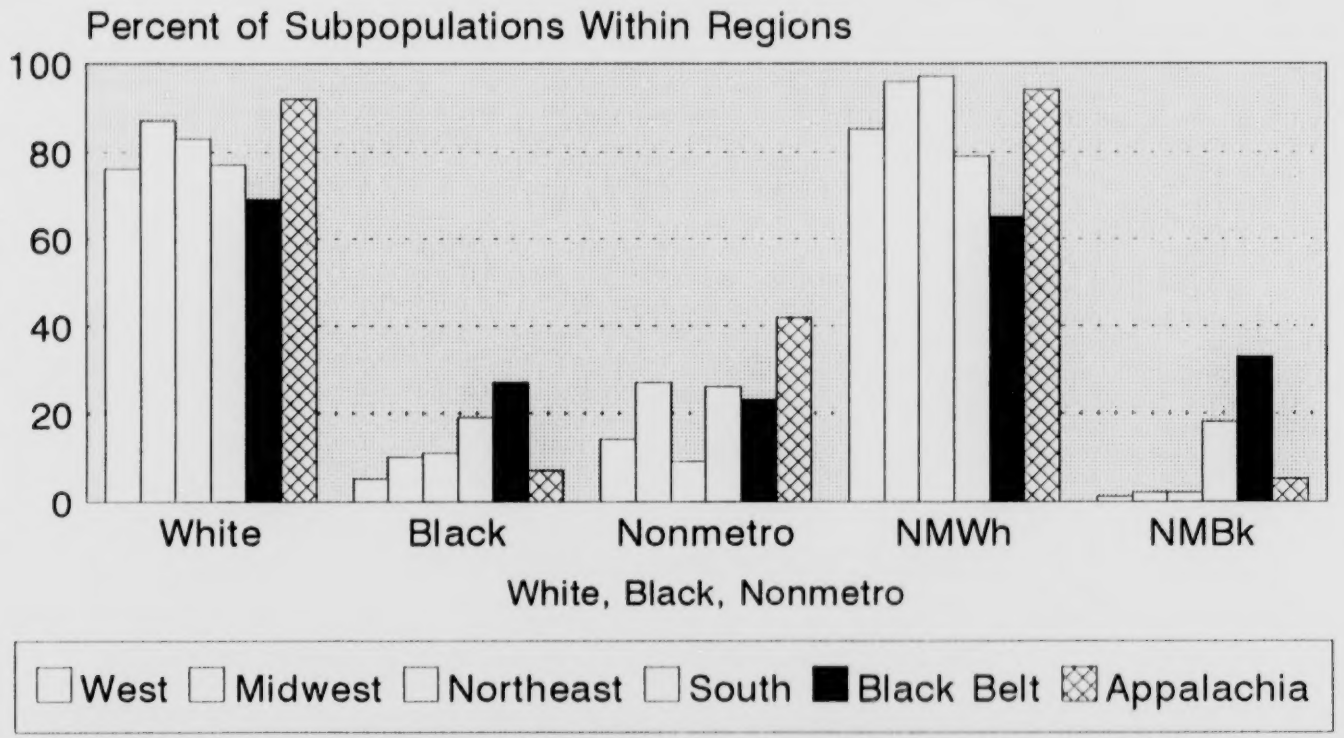
Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

Percentages and numbers for metro and nonmetro sections of the table sum to the total U.S. population. Subcategories for urban and rural sum across rows in their respective metro or nonmetro sections of the table.

[b]The bases, or denominators for the percentages, are the total numbers of people in the U.S., each region, or each designated subpopulation.

[c]Interpret as follows: 79.8 percent of the U.S. population is metro; 8.9 percent of those living in the Northeast are nonmetro; in the metro South, 18.7 percent are rural residents; in the nonmetro Black Belt 65.8 percent are rural residents; etc.

Figure 1. Subpopulations Within U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Shares Across Regions

The South in regional perspective. The South is large. It is not only large geographically but in population as well. This demographic fact is seldom recognized. According to the last major U.S. census in 1990, the South holds 34 percent of the people in this country and is by far the most populated region of the United States. The South's 85 million exceeds the 51 million of the Northeast, the 63 million of the Midwest, and the 53 million of the West (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992a; 1995: 28; see also Table 4 and Figures 2 and 3). Furthermore, mid-1995 population estimates indicate the South is growing still larger and now numbers 91 million or 35 percent of the U.S. population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1996: 10).

Perhaps surprisingly, it is not the northern border states that give the South so many people. Rather, the South is demographically large because it contains some of the most heavily populated states in the country. While California has the largest population, Texas—a southern state—has moved into second place ahead of New York. Florida is fourth. Georgia and North Carolina are essentially even at tenth and eleventh places, and Virginia is twelfth.

The Black Belt. The southern picture becomes even more interesting when the Black Belt is examined within the context of the larger South. Over half of the southern population and nearly a fifth of the U. S. residents live in the 623 Black Belt counties.

Viewed in comparison, the Black Belt's 45 million or 18 percent of the U.S. population is nearly as large as the 51 million or 20 percent of the United States who live in the populous Northeast. And, the Black Belt has over twice the population of Appalachia. Both the South and its Black Belt are large places.

African-American population. The 1990 census finds that 53 percent of the African-American population lives in the South (Table 4; Figure 4). This, of course, outnumbers blacks living in all other major U.S. regions combined. Despite outmigrations since the Civil War, the South continues to be home to most African-Americans. Within the South, 86 percent of the black population lives in the 11 Black Belt states, and over three-fourths of the southern blacks live in the 623 Black Belt counties of these states.

Southern and U.S. rurality. At what time in U.S. history did the United States have the most rural people? The answer is now. This is another little-known, demographic fact. The 1990 census counted more rural people—62 million—than in any previous census (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992a, 1995: 43; Table 5).

Using the 1993 classification of metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties, 2,297 of the 3,141 U.S. counties or county-equivalents are nonmetro (Wimberley and Morris 1997). These nonmetro counties contain over 50 million U.S. residents (Table 6).

Which U.S. region has the most rural and nonmetropolitan people? Yes, it is the South. Ironically, the South is a very rural place despite its large, overall population. The South claims 43 percent, or 27 million, of the rural population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1995: 43; also Table 5; Figure 5) and 45 percent, or 22 million, of the nonmetro population (Table 6; Figure 6). The Midwest trails the South at a distant second in both rural and nonmetro residents. The Black Belt accounts for much of the nonmetro South and more of the nonmetro population than either the Northeast or Midwest.

Zooming in still closer, we find that 91 percent of the nonmetro blacks live in the South and that four of five live in the Black Belt (Table 4; Figure 7).

The Black Belt and Appalachia. Combined, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions hold nearly one-fourth of the U.S. population. As noted, the Black Belt is entirely southern and can easily be graphed as a part of the South. Recall that although Appalachia is mainly southern and overlaps with 48 Black Belt counties, it includes parts of New York and Pennsylvania in the Northeast and edges Ohio in the Midwest. With 18 percent of the population, the Black Belt has twice as many people as the 8 percent living in Appalachia (Table 3). Except in Mississippi, Alabama, and a few of the Black Belt's southern Appalachian counties, few African-Americans live in Appalachia. For that matter, many more whites live in the Black Belt than in Appalachia which is, of course, predominately white.

Table 4. Populations, Across Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Total	White	Black	Metro	Nonmetro	Nonmetro White	Nonmetro Black
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	248,709,873	199,868,070	29,986,070	198,582,657	50,127,216	43,682,458	4,352,231
Northeast	%	20.4%[b]	21.1%	18.7%	23.3%	9.0%	10.1%	1.5%
(217)	N	50,809,229	42,068,904	5,613,222	46,293,640	4,515,589	4,392,615	67,401
Midwest	%	24.0%	26.0%	19.1%	22.0%	31.8%	35.2%	5.6%
(1,055)	N	59,668,632	52,017,957	5,715,940	43,710,195	15,958,437	15,391,840	245,523
West	%	21.2%	20.0%	9.4%	22.9%	14.6%	14.2%	1.6%
(444)	N	52,786,082	40,017,010	2,826,010	45,487,222	7,298,860	6,220,578	68,091
South	%	34.4%	32.8%[b]	52.8%	31.8%	44.6%	40.5%	91.2%
(1,425)	N	85,445,930	65,582,199	15,828,888	63,091,600	22,354,330	17,677,425	3,971,216
Black Belt	%	18.2%	15.7%	40.3%[b]	17.5%	20.9%	15.7%	78.9%
(623)	N	45,250,315	31,331,093	12,088,640	34,785,145	10,465.170	6,836,893	3,434,581
Appalachia	%	8.3%	9.5%	5.0%	6.1%	17.2%	18.6%	9.6%
(404)	N	20,701,881	18,994,316	1,508,096	12,075,980	8,625,901	8,137,168	417,233

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 4 (also see Figures 2, 3, 4, and 7):

[a]In this, "...Across Regions," table, the **totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the column sums of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

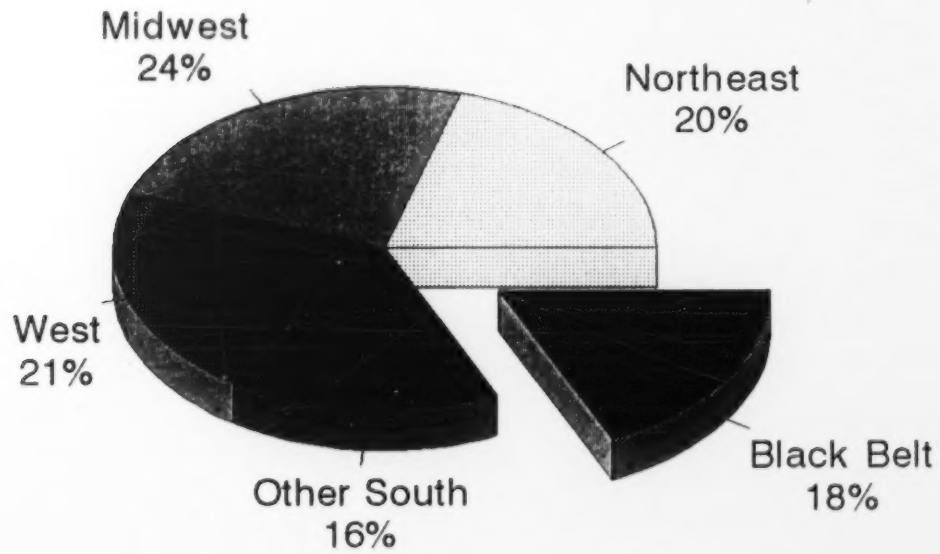
The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

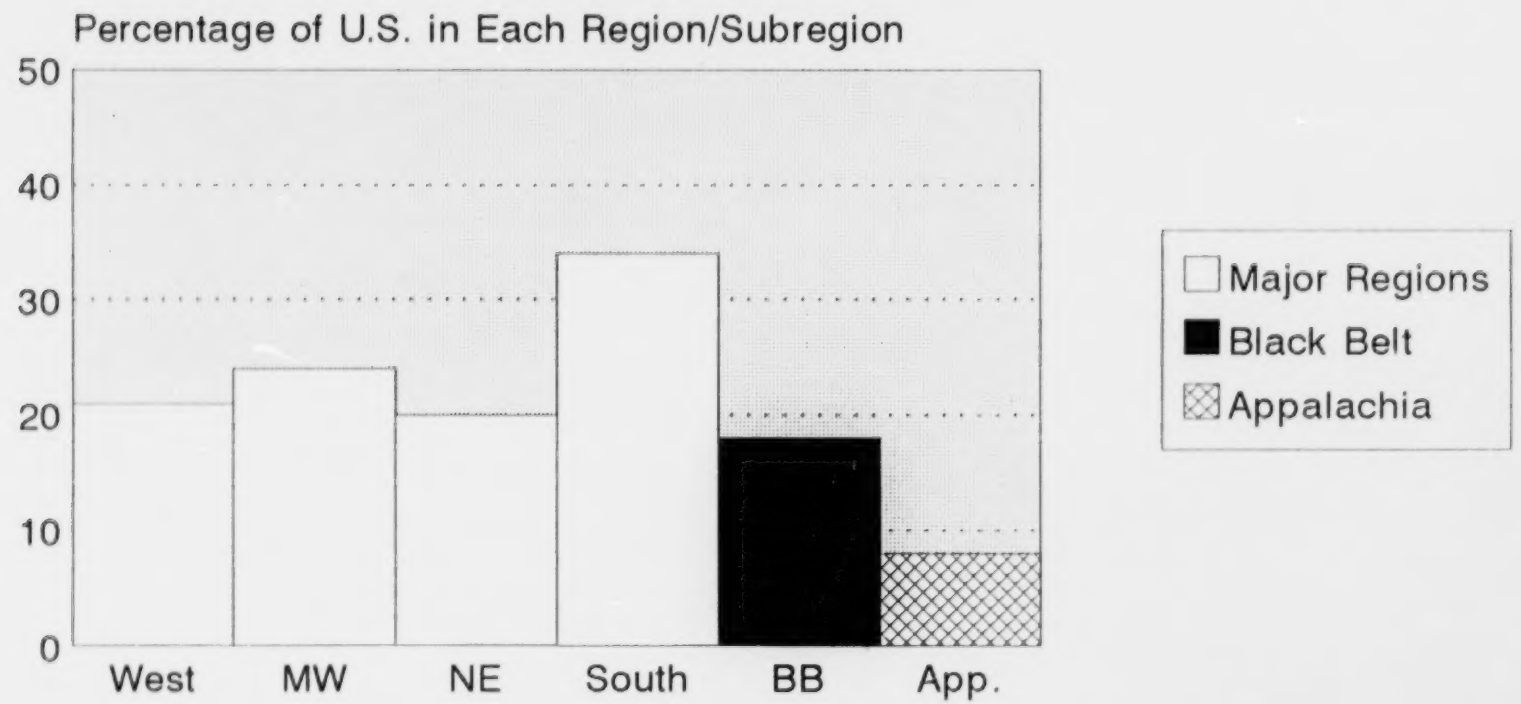
[b]Interpret as follows: 20.4 percent of the U.S. population lives in the Northeast; 32.8 percent of the white population lives in the South; 40.3 percent of the black population lives in the Black Belt; etc.

Figure 2. U.S. Population
Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



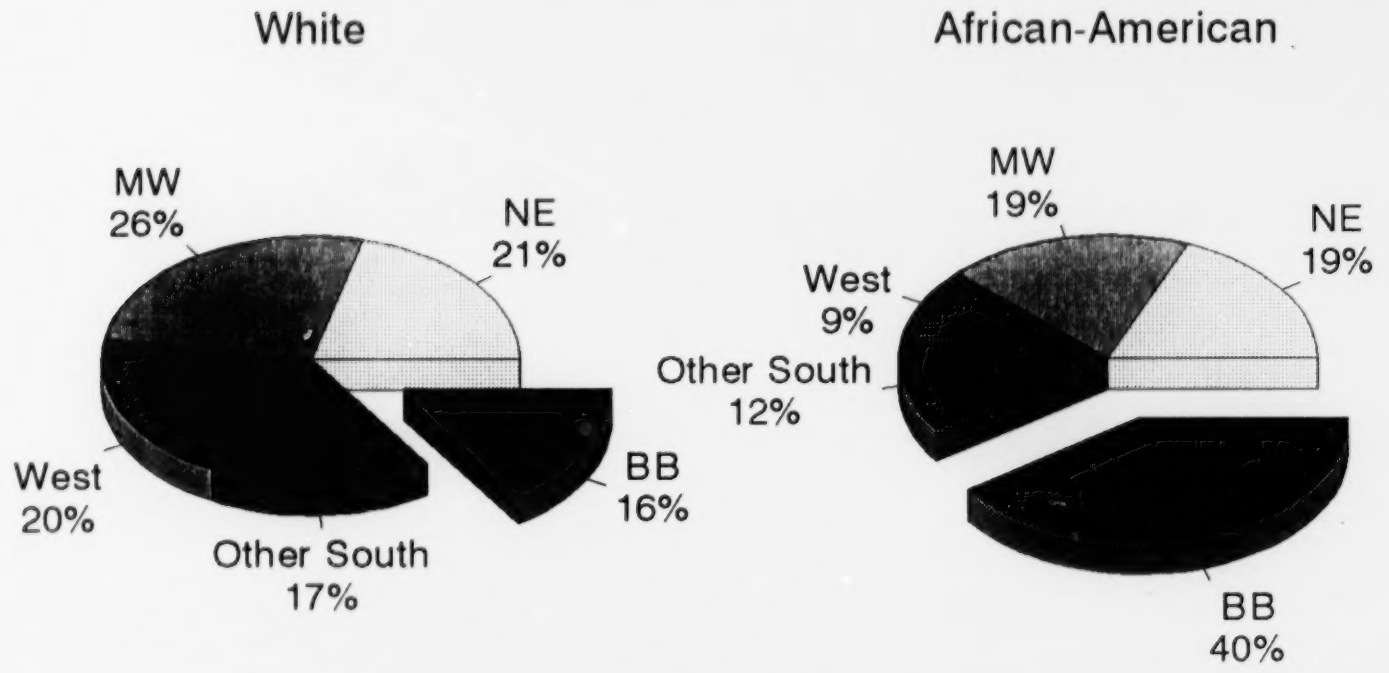
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
U.S. pop. in millions: U.S. 248.7, West 52.8, MW 59.7, NE 50.8, South 85.4, Black Belt 45.3.

Figure 3. Portions of U.S. Population Across Major Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mostly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Figure 4. White and Black Populations Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
In millions, white: U.S. 199.7, West 40.0, MW 52.0, NE 42.1, South 65.6, Black Belt 31.3.
African-American: U.S. 30.0, West 2.8, MW 5.7, NE 5.6, South 15.8, Black Belt 12.1.

Table 5. Urban and Rural Populations by Metro and Nonmetro Residence, Across Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Urban			Rural		
		Total	Metro	Nonmetro	Total	Metro	Nonmetro
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	187,051,543	168,880,482	18,171,061	61,658,330	29,702,175	31,956,155
Northeast	%	21.4%[b]	23.0%	7.0%	17.4%	25.1%	10.2%
(217)	N	40,094,568	38,828,497	1,266,071	10,714,661	7,465,143	3,249,518
Midwest	%	22.9%	21.8%	32.8%	27.4%	23.3%	31.3%
(1,055)	N	42,770,360	36,801,360	5,969,000	16,898,272	6,908,835	9,989,437
West	%	24.3%	24.8%	19.7%	11.8%	11.9%	11.6%
(444)	N	45,529,779	41,948,365	3,581,414	7,256,303	3,538,857	3,717,446
South	%	31.4%	30.4%	40.5%	43.4%	39.7%[b]	46.9%
(1,425)	N	58,656,836	51,302,260	7,354,576	26,789,094	11,789,340	14,999,754
Black Belt	%	17.7%	17.5%	19.7%	19.7%	17.7%	21.6%[b]
(623)	N	33,099,959	29,521,537	3,578,422	12,150,356	5,263,608	6,886,748
Appalachia	%	5.2%	4.6%	11.7%	17.7%	14.8%	20.3%
(404)	N	9,815,750	7,684,628	2,131,122	10,886,131	4,391,352	6,494,779

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 5 (also see Figure 5):

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

Percentages and numbers for urban and rural sections of the table sum to the total U.S. population. Subcategories for metro and nonmetro sum across rows in their respective urban and rural sections of the table.

[b]Interpret as follows: 21.4 percent of the urban population lives in the Northeast; 39.7 percent of the rural metro population lives in the South; 21.6 percent of the rural nonmetro population lives in the Black Belt; etc.

Table 6. Metro and Nonmetro Populations by Urban and Rural Residence, Across Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Metro			Nonmetro		
		Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	198,582,657	168,880,482	29,702,175	50,127,216	18,171,061	31,956,155
Northeast	%	23.3%[b]	23.0%	25.1%	9.0%	7.0%	10.2%
(217)	N	46,293,640	38,828,497	7,465,143	4,515,589	1,266,071	3,249,518
Midwest	%	22.0%	21.8%	23.3%	31.8%	32.8%	31.3%
(1,055)	N	43,710,195	36,801,360	6,908,835	15,958,437	5,969,000	9,989,437
West	%	22.9%	24.8%	11.9%	14.6%	19.7%	11.6%
(444)	N	45,487,222	41,948,365	3,538,857	7,298,860	3,581,414	3,717,446
South	%	31.8%	30.4%	39.7%[b]	44.6%	40.5%	46.9%
(1,425)	N	63,091,600	51,302,260	11,789,340	22,354,330	7,354,576	14,999,754
Black Belt	%	17.5%	17.5%	17.7%	24.2%	19.7%	21.6%[b]
(623)	N	34,785,145	29,521,537	5,263,608	12,150,356	3,578,422	6,886,748
Appalachia	%	6.1%	4.6%	14.8%	17.2%	11.7%	20.3%
(404)	N	12,075,980	7,684,628	4,391,352	8,625,901	2,131,122	6,494,779

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 6 (also see Figure 6):

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

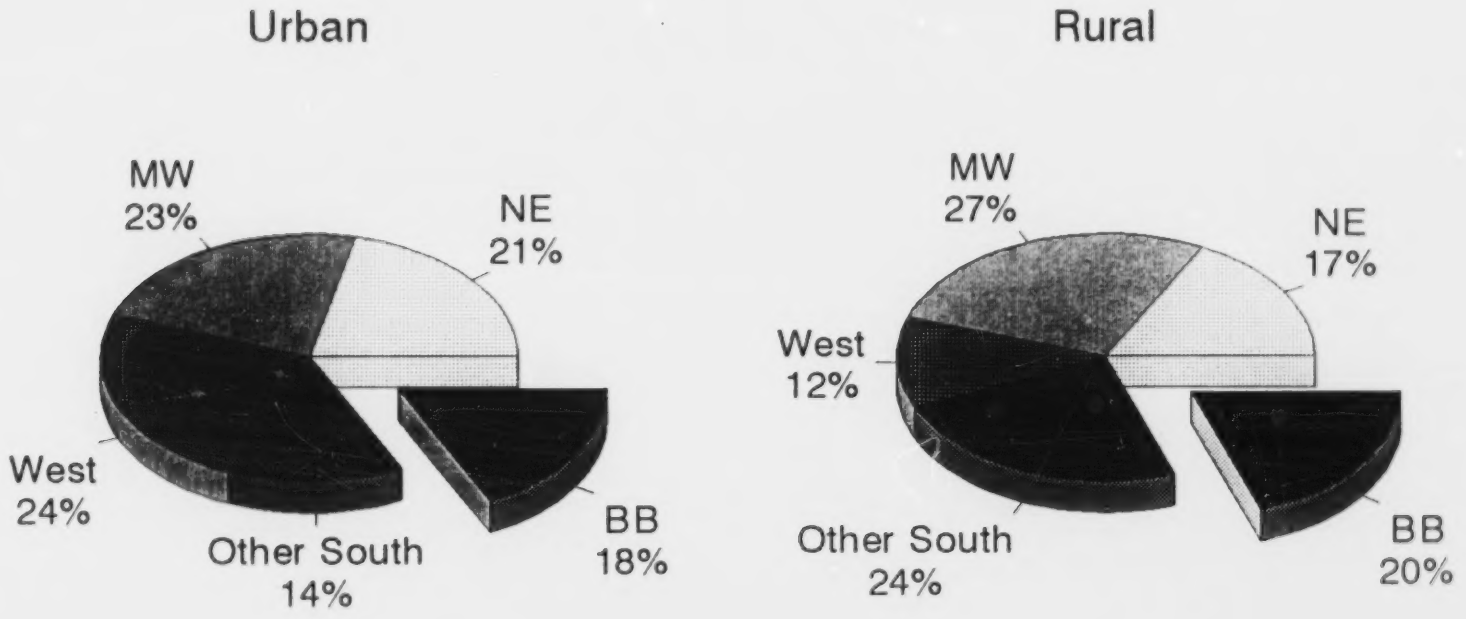
The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

Percentages and numbers for metro and nonmetro sections of the table sum to the total U.S. population. Subcategories for urban and rural sum across rows in their respective metro or nonmetro sections of the table.

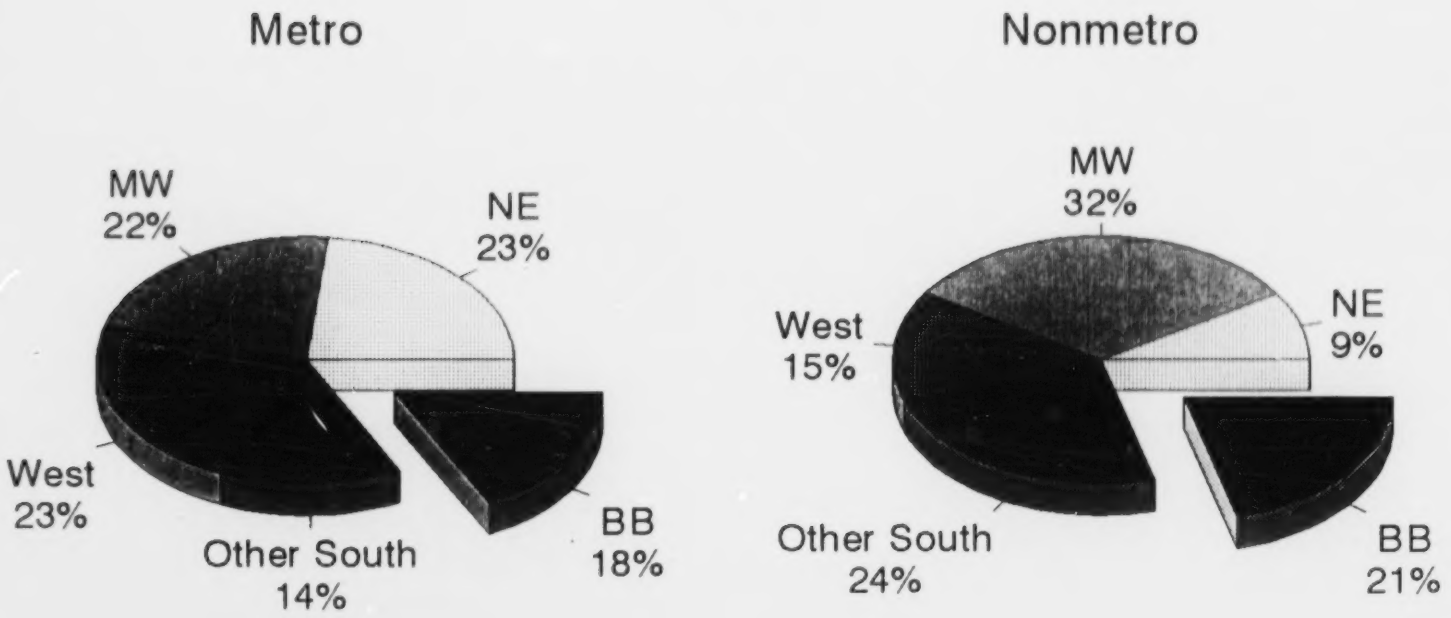
[b]Interpret as follows: 23.3 percent of the metro population lives in the Northeast; 39.7 percent of the rural metro population lives in the South; 21.6 percent of the rural nonmetro population lives in the Black Belt; etc.

Figure 5. Urban and Rural Populations Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



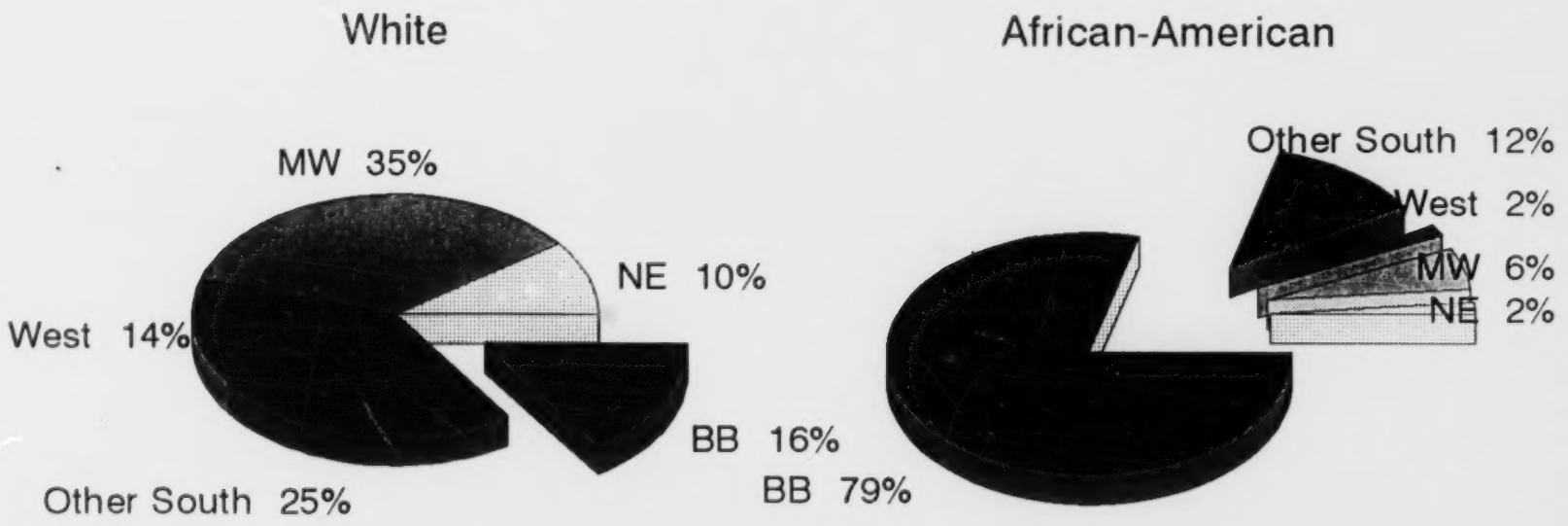
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
In Millions, urban: U.S. 187.1, West 45.5, MW 42.8, NE 40.1, South 58.7, Black Belt 33.1.
Rural: U.S. 61.7, West 7.3, MW 16.9, NE 10.7, South 26.8, Black Belt 12.2.

Figure 6. Metro and Nonmetro Populations Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. and 1993 OMB metro/nonmetro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. In millions, metro: U.S. 198.6, West 45.5, MW 43.7, NE 46.3, South 63.1, Black Belt 34.8. Nonmetro: U.S. 50.1, West 7.3, MW 16.0, NE 4.5, South 22.4, Black Belt 10.5.

Figure 7. Nonmetro White and Black Populations Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro/nonmetro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. In millions, white: U.S. 43.7, West 6.2, MW 15.4, NE 4.4., South 17.7, BB 6.8. Black: U.S. 4.35, West .07, MW .25, NE .07, South 3.97, BB 3.43. Black total > 100% due to rounding.

Part III.
Poverty

Poverty is the most commonly used indicator of quality of life. Poverty represents a social problem for everyone in a society, and it limits socioeconomic opportunities for the adults and children it claims. Poverty is measured by annual household income and household composition according to Office of Management and Budget criteria (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992b; 1995: 481). In the 1990 census, a single person under 65 and living alone was poor if he or she received less than $6,451 during the previous year, and those in a family of four were poor if their income was below $12,674.

Poverty Rates Within Regions

The 1990 census found 13 percent of the people in the United States to be poor. This breaks into 16 percent of those living in the South, 13 percent in the West, 12 percent in the Midwest, and 11 percent in the Northeast. Regional differences are apparent. The chances of being poor if one lives in the South are appreciably higher than if one lives in other regions. By appearances, a difference of 3 percentage points from the national average or from the nearest ranking region may not seem that great. But the low size of the numbers obscures the fact that the South's 3-point difference above the U.S. rate is actually a 23 percent increase above the U.S. rate.

On closer examination (Table 7; Figure 8), we find that the Black Belt South has a 17 percent poverty rate, and that Appalachia has 15 percent.

Poverty rates, black and white. African-Americans are about three times as likely to be poor as whites—about 30 percent versus 10 percent respectively—in the United States at large (Table 7). These poverty rates increase slightly for the South. In the Black Belt, however, white poverty falls back to the national average whereas black poverty rises to 34 percent. In other words, one-tenth of the white residents of the Black Belt are poor in contrast to over one-third of the African-Americans. In Appalachia, the 32 percent poverty rate is also higher than average for blacks and, at 14 percent, is the highest of any region for whites.

Outside the South, the only major region where the poverty rate for blacks exceeds their national rate is the Midwest with 32 percent. Black poverty rates in the Northeast and West fall to 24 and 22 percent, respectively,

which are low for African-Americans. However, the rates for whites are a low 10 percent in the West and only 8 percent in the Northeast. Although blacks fare better in the Northeast and West, they are still two or three times as likely to be poor than the white population of the same regions.

Nonmetro poverty rates. Nonmetro people are about half again as likely to be poor as are metro populations (Table 7). This is consistent across the South, Black Belt, and Appalachia. Among the major regions, both nonmetro and metro poverty rates are highest in the South. But with 23 percent of its nonmetro residents and 15 percent of its metro residents in poverty, the Black Belt has the highest of both rates for all regions.

Not only are poverty rates lowest in the Northeast, at 12 nonmetro and 10 percent metro, they are also lower and more evenly balanced in the nonmetro and metro Midwest and West. Metro Appalachian poverty approximates the national level, but Appalachia's 19 percent rate of nonmetro poverty falls between the rate of the nonmetro South and those of the remaining regions.

Nationally, 40 percent of the blacks in nonmetro areas are poor as compared to 14 percent of the nonmetro whites. In the Black Belt South, nonmetro poverty for blacks rises to its highest regional level at 42 percent. Nonmetro white poverty is highest in Appalachia where 18 percent are poor. Although nonmetro poverty decreases in other U.S. regions, the rates remain over twice as high for nonmetro blacks than for nonmetro whites. Outside the South, the highest level of nonmetro black poverty is in the Midwest.

Percentages both ways again. These poverty-rate percentages tell us proportionately how many are poor, but this is just one of the useful ways to view the extent of poverty or other quality-of-life indicators. As noted earlier, the percentages can be calculated from another direction as well, and from a direction analysts often fail to look. Perhaps this is one reason why impoverishment in the Black Belt and South have remained less visible.

In other words, the poverty rates (Table 7) reveal the percentage of poverty within the nation and each region. But, these rates are a way of standardizing comparisons from region to region, and such rates mask the percentage share and underlying numerical strength of poverty in one region versus another.

Table 7. People in Poverty, Within the U.S. and Regions, 1990[a]

Region (N Counties)		Total	White	Black	Metro	Nonmetro	Nonmetro White	Nonmetro Black
U.S.	%	13.1%[c]	9.8%	29.5%	12.1%	17.3%	14.3%	40.3%
(3,141)	N	31,724,864	19,025,235	8,441,429	23,374,022	8,368,842	6,056,171	1,638,027
	Base[b]	241,977,859	194,811,704	28,663,173	193,479,264	48,498,595	42,420,632	4,067,333
Northeast	%	10.6%	7.7%	24.3%	10.4%	12.1%	11.8%	25.5%
(217)	N	5,214,372	3,147,300	1,304,926	4,691,184	523,188	501,255	10,795
	Base	49,352,506	40,972,725	5,365,068	45,030,958	4,321,548	4,231,434	42,279
Midwest	%	12.0%	9.4%	32.2%	11.4%	13.6%	12.9%	35.5%
(1,055)	N	6,971,020	4,760,343	1,763,248	4,874,646	2,096,374	1,922,529	65,728
	Base	58,035,788	50,689,705	5,478,736	42,639,353	15,396,435	14,906,588	185,393
West	%	12.6%	9.9%	21.7%	12.0%	16.3%	13.6%	27.6%
(444)	N	6,492,178	3,858,658	573,602	5,325,771	1,156,407	828,546	13,296
	Base	51,482,619	39,134,837	2,644,782	44,393,478	7,098,141	6,062,058	48,214
South	%	15.7%	11.3%[c]	31.6%	13.8%	21.2%	16.3%	40.8%
(1,425)	N	13,065,294	7,258,934	4,799,653	8,472,421	4,592,873	2,805,841	1,548,208
	Base	83,106,946	64,014,437	15,174,587	61,415,475	21,691,471	17,220,552	3,791,447
Black Belt	%	16.7%	9.9%	33.9%[c]	14.9%	22.9%	13.4%	41.8%[c]
(623)	N	7,346,996	3,010,742	3,937,136	5,028,824	2,318,172	889,345	1,377,747
	Base	43,901,594	30,509,321	11,628,461	33,797,748	10,103,846	6,629,540	3,294,195
Appalachia	%	15.2%	13.8%	32.4%	12.8%	18.7%	17.7%	36.4%
(404)	N	3,066,828	2,564,122	459,825	1,501,809	1,565,019	1,404,302	141,862
	Base	20,139,012	18,538,566	1,420,552	11,752,389	8,386,623	7,928,804	389,678

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 7 (also see Figure 8):

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

Percentages and numbers for white and black, metro and nonmetro, and nonmetro white and nonmetro black in this, "Within the U.S. and Regions," table sum across the rows.

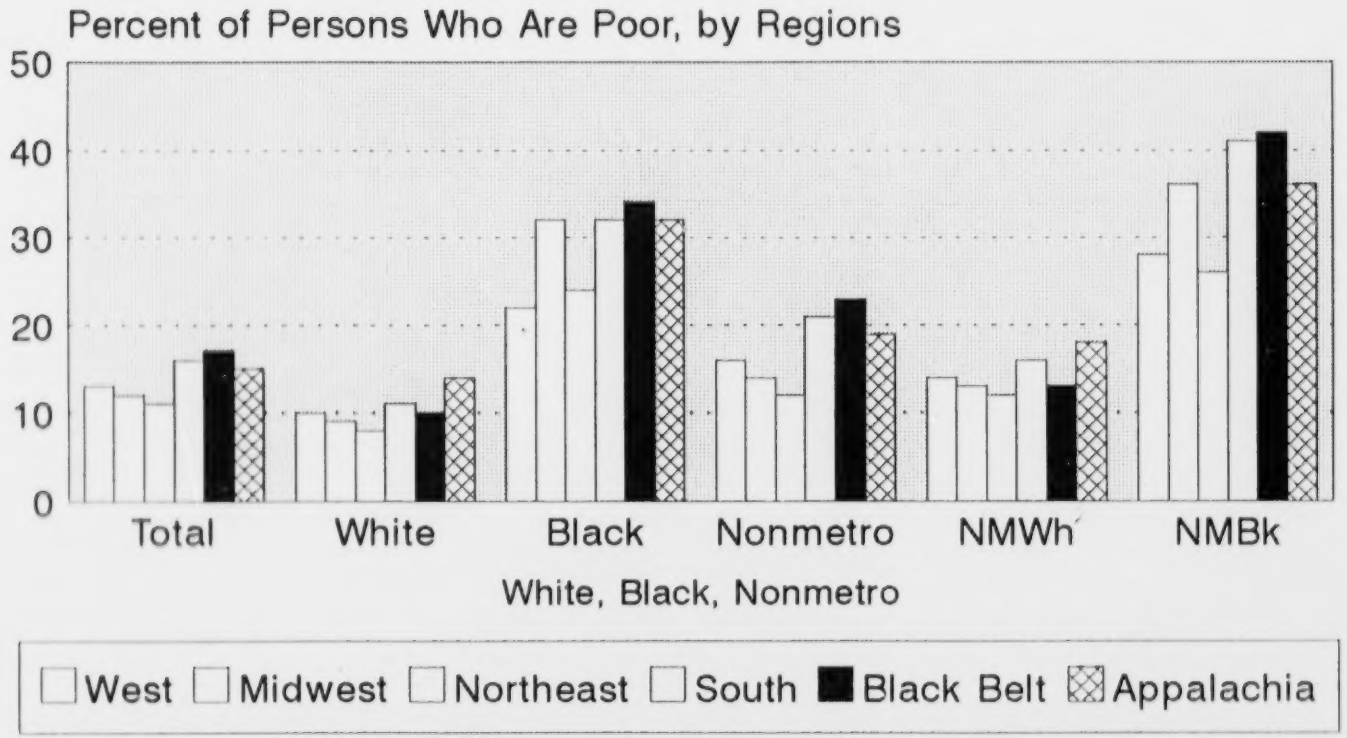
White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

[b]The bases, or denominators for the percentages, are the total numbers of people in the U.S., each region, or each designated subpopulation that are defined by the census as persons for whom poverty status is determined. This base of poverty-eligible population is somewhat smaller than the total population. It excludes "institutionalized persons, persons in military group quarters and in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992b: B-27)."

[c]Interpret as follows: 13.5 of the U.S. population is poor; 11.3 percent of the southern whites are poor; 33.9 percent of the blacks in the Black Belt are poor; etc.

Figure 8. Poverty Within U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mostly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Shares of Poverty Across Regions

It is one thing to say that 16 percent of the southerners are poor (Table 7). It is quite different to say that 41 percent of the nation's poor live in the South (Table 8; Figure 9). The South's 41 percent share of U.S. poverty is disproportionately higher than the 34 percent share of the U.S. population that lives in the South.

Percentages showing regional shares help to answer the question, "Where are the poor?" From this perspective, the South is not only home to a higher percentage rate, but with a 41 percent share of the nation's poverty, it is also home to about two or three times as many poor people as can be found in any other U.S. region. The southern region's 16 states have over 13 million, of the nation's 32 million poor people as counted by the 1990 census (Figure 9). This makes the South the principal region of U.S. poverty and, in this light, the most prominent location for U.S. poverty. No other U.S. region comes close to matching the South in its share of the poor.

Inside the South, the 623 counties of the Black Belt are where 23 percent—nearly one-fourth—of the nation's poor people live (Table 8; Figure 9). Alone, the Black Belt counties contain more poverty than do any of the other major U.S. regions, including the remainder of the South!

Poverty and race. A highly disproportionate share of African-American poverty also persists in the South and its Black Belt. Forty-seven percent of the black poor live in the Black Belt, and a total of 57 percent live in the South (Figure 10). Again, no other region comes close.

Nonmetro poverty. Race, region, and poverty have an unfortunate association but, in addition, there is rurality. As a rule, the nation's rural places have higher poverty rates than urban places. Looking specifically at nonmetropolitan poverty across the U.S. regions (Figure 11), a familiar pattern emerges: the southern region has most of our nation's nonmetro poor. In this case, the 45 percent of the nation's nonmetro people who live in the South have the majority—55 percent—of the nation's nonmetro poverty.

Within the larger South, the Black Belt has 28 percent of the nonmetro poverty in the United States. As before, this is more than either of the other major U.S. regions. Without doubt, the Black Belt in particular and the South

in general are the worst areas of nonmetro poverty in the United States. Rurality compounds the regional effect.

Nonmetro, African-American poverty. Focusing on the intersection of race, region, and rurality, 84 percent of the poor nonmetro blacks live in the Black Belt and 95 percent of them live in the South(Figure 12). Nowhere else is the percentage of poor so unusually high.

The Black Belt and Appalachia. By way of comparison, the Black Belt has about 45 million people to Appalachia's 21 million, or about 18 percent versus 8 percent of the U.S. population (Figure 13). Yet the Black Belt contains disproportionately more of the nation's poor—23 percent in the Black Belt versus 10 percent in Appalachia (Table 8). Because of its larger population, the Black Belt also surpasses Appalachia in numerical and percentage shares of total poverty, white poverty, black poverty, metro and nonmetro poverty, and nonmetro black poverty. Only in nonmetro white poverty does Appalachia's share exceed that of the Black Belt.

Table 8. People in Poverty, Across Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Total	White	Black	Metro	Nonmetro	Nonmetro White	Nonmetro Black
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	31,742,864	19,025,235	8,441,429	23,374,022	8,368,842	6,056,171	1,638,027
Northeast	%	16.4%[b]	16.5%	15.5%	20.1%	6.3%	8.3%	0.7%
(217)	N	5,214,372	3,147,300	1,304,926	4,691,184	523,188	501,255	10,795
Midwest	%	22.0%	25.0%	20.9%	20.9%	25.0%	31.7%	4.0%
(1,055)	N	6,971,020	4,760,343	1,763,248	4,874,646	2,096,374	1,922,529	65,728
West	%	20.5%	20.3%	6.8%	22.8%	13.8%	13.6%	0.8%
(444)	N	6,492,178	3,858,658	573,602	5,335,771	1,156,407	826,546	13,296
South	%	41.2%	38.2%[b]	56.9%	36.2%	54.9%	46.3%	94.5%
(1,425)	N	13,065,294	7,258,934	4,799,653	8,472,421	4,592,873	2,805,841	1,548,208
Black Belt	%	23.1%	15.8%	46.6%[b]	21.5%	27.7%	14.7%	84.1%
(623)	N	7,346,996	3,010,742	3,937,136	5,028,824	2,318,172	889,345	1,377,747
Appalachia	%	9.7%	13.5%	5.4%	6.4%	18.7%	23.2%	8.7%
(404)	N	3,066,828	2,564,122	459,825	1,501,809	1,565,019	1,404,302	141,862

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 8 (also see Figures 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13):

[a]In this, "...Across Regions," table, the **totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the column sums of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

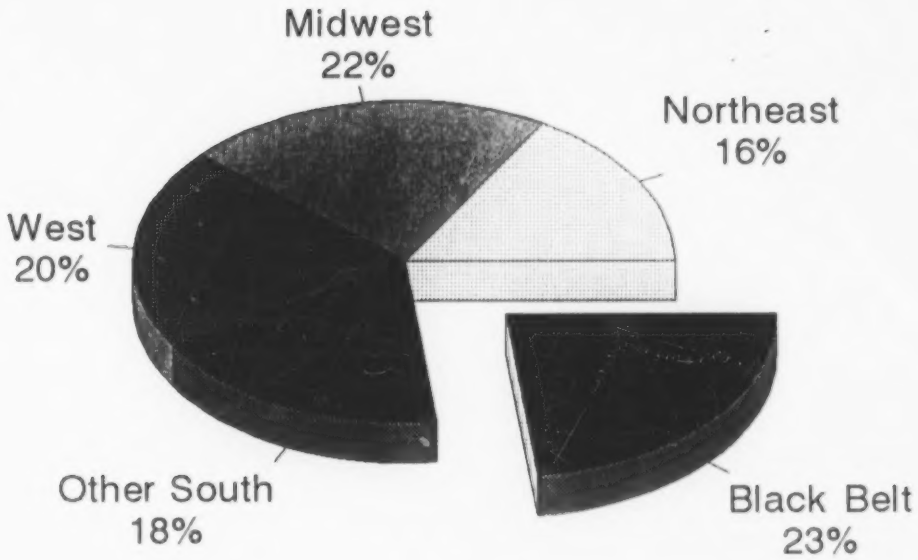
The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

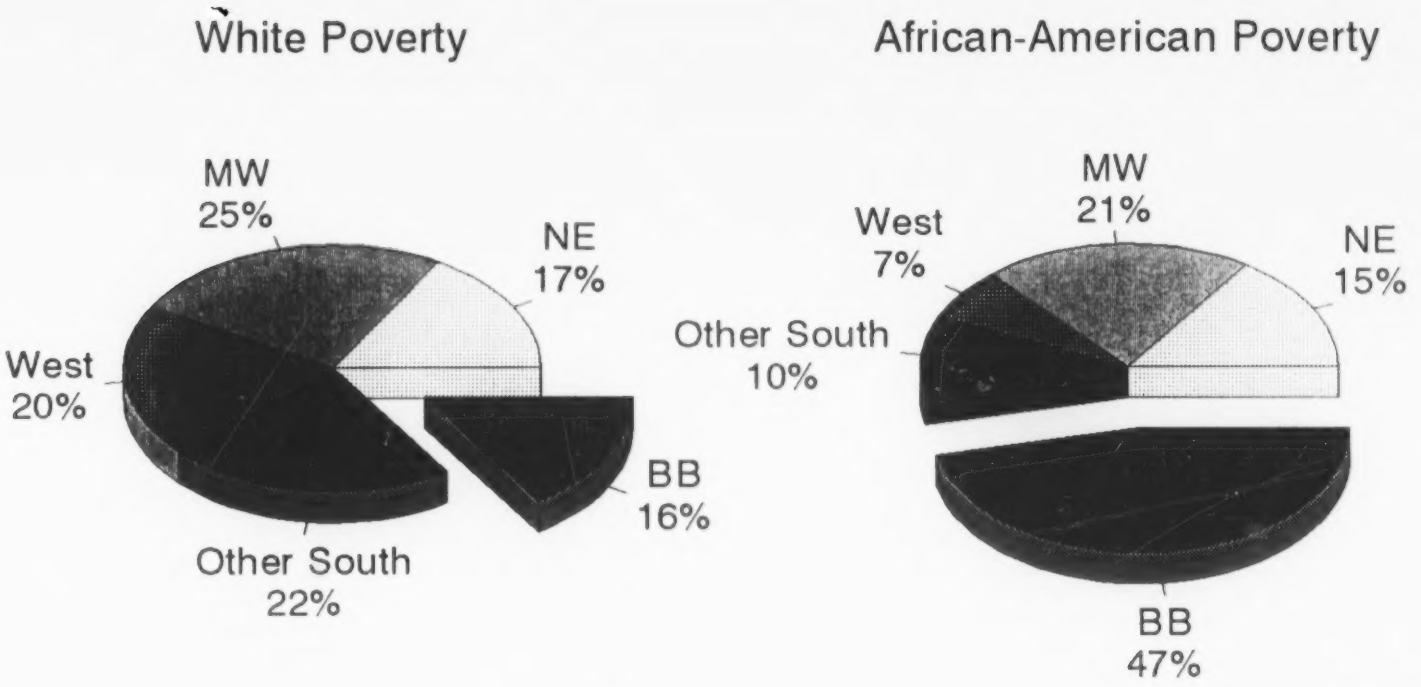
[b]Interpret as follows: 16.4 percent of the poor live in the Northeast; 38.2 percent of the white poor live in the South; 46.6 percent of the black poor live in the Black Belt; etc.

Figure 9. Poverty Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



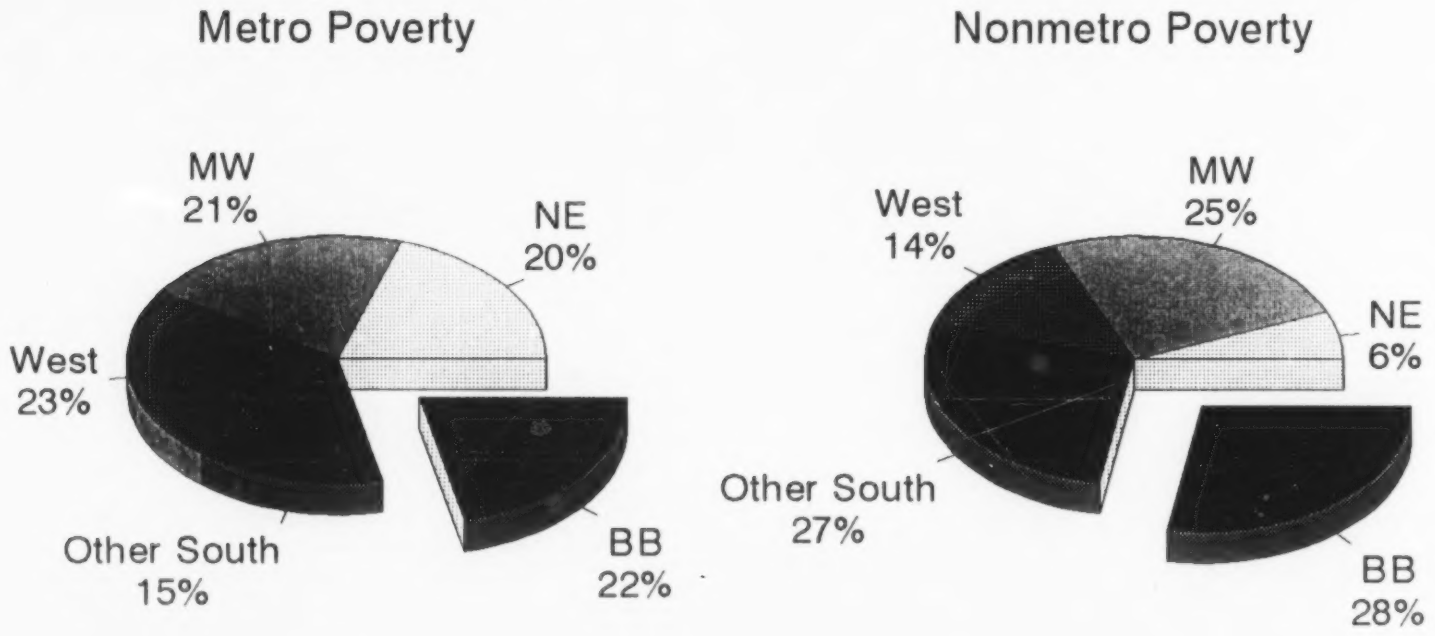
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
U.S. poverty in millions: U.S. 31.7, West 6.5, MW 7.0, NE 5.2, South 13.1, Black Belt 7.3.

Figure 10. White and Black Poverty Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



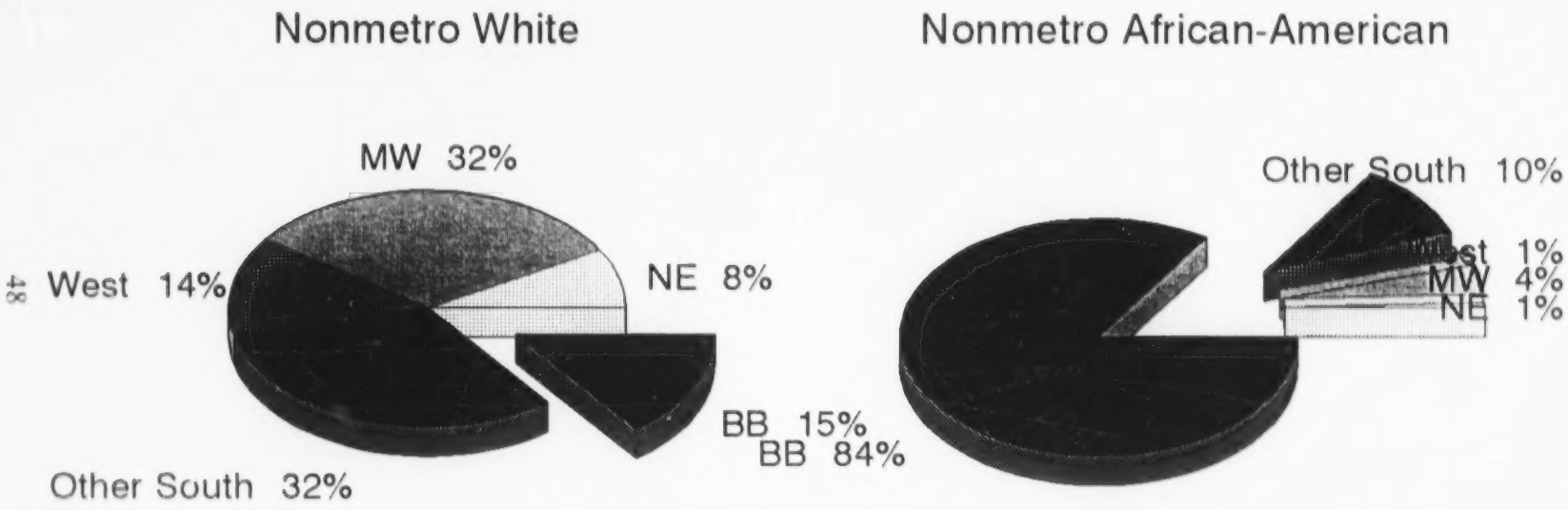
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
White poverty in millions: U.S. 19.03, West 3.86, MW 4.76, NE 3.15, South 7.26, Black Belt 3.01.
African-American poverty: U.S. 8.44, West .57, MW 1.76, NE 1.30, South 4.80, Black Belt 3.94.

Figure 11. Metro and Nonmetro Poverty Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



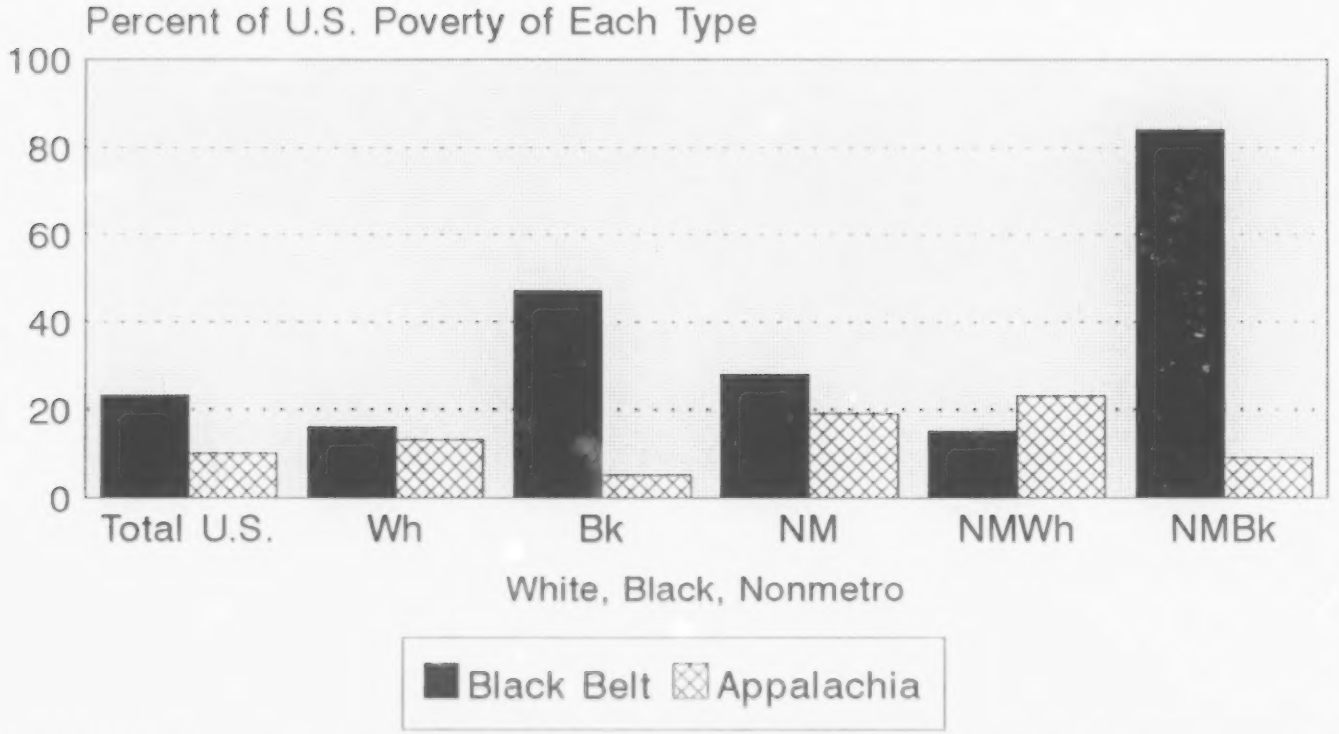
Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro/nonmetro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. Metro poverty in millions: U.S. 23.4, West 5.3, MW 4.9, NE 4.7, South 8.5, Black Belt 5.0. Nonmetro poverty: U.S. 8.4, West 1.2, MW 2.1, NE .5, South 4.6, Black Belt 2.3.

Figure 12. Nonmetro Whites and Blacks in Poverty Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro/nonmetro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. Nonmetro white poor in millions: U.S. 6.06, West .83, MW 1.92, NE .50, South 2.81, BB .89. Black: U.S. 1.64, West .01, MW .07, NE .01, South 1.55, Black Belt 1.34.

Figure 13. Poverty Across the Black Belt and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Part IV.
Education

Education has emerged as the primary means for achieving social, economic, and employment opportunities in our society. Low levels of education result in fewer opportunities for a higher overall quality of life. An educational level of special significance for U.S. quality of life is high school graduation. Without graduating from high school, one faces fewer opportunities for employment, income, and social status in American society. In this section, we look at data on high school attainment as provided by the U.S. Census for people who are 25 years old or older.

Rates of Not Graduating from High School, Nationally and Within Regions

Nationally, one-fourth of the population aged 25 or older has not graduated from high school (Table 9). The rate of not graduating from high school is highest in Appalachia where it reaches 32 percent and in the South and in the Black Belt where it is 29 percent. The lowest rate occurs in the West where only 21 percent have not graduated. The Midwest and the Northeast follow closely with 23 and 24 percent.

Graduation and race. Graduating from high school differs for whites and blacks. Among whites, 22 percent do not finish high school; among blacks, 37 percent. In the Black Belt, 43 percent of the African-Americans do not graduate from high school while 31 percent of the whites do not graduate in Appalachia (Figure 14). In each regional comparison, a margin of nearly 8 points or more favors white graduation.

In the West, high school incompletion rates are the lowest of any region for both whites and blacks at 18 and 24 percent respectively. The 6 percent racial gap in the West is also the lowest of any region. This is achieved primarily by better graduation rates for African-Americans.

Metro/nonmetro rates. People living in nonmetro areas are less likely to graduate from high school than their metro counterparts. Overall, 31 percent of the nonmetro and 23 percent of the metro residents have not graduated. This difference carries through all regions but is highest in the South and Black Belt where it ranges from about 25 percent metro to 39 percent nonmetro. The split is much lower elsewhere. In the West, for instance, the nonmetro rate of 23

percent and metro rate of 21 percent are the lowest anywhere and only a couple of points apart.

It is the nonmetro blacks who suffer the highest rates of not graduating. Over half—52 percent—have not finished. Furthermore, 3 of 10 nonmetro whites have not graduated. In the nonmetro Black Belt, the rate peaks at 54 percent for blacks. In Appalachia, it rises to 37 percent for nonmetro whites and to 51 percent among nonmetro blacks.

Beyond the South, the nonmetro white rates for not completing high school range from a low of 20 percent in the West to 26 percent in the Midwest which is still far below the 36 percent rate of high school incompletion for nonmetro, southern whites. Outside the South, rates for nonmetro blacks run from a low of 30 percent in the West to a high of 39 percent in the Midwest.

Obviously, the lack of education that indicates a poor quality of life is far worse for nonmetropolitan people white or black. And the situation is especially severe in nonmetro areas and for blacks living in the South, Black Belt, and Appalachia.

Table 9. People Ages 25 and Older Who Are Not High School Graduates, Within the U.S. and Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Total	White	Black	Metro	Nonmetro	Nonmetro White	Nonmetro Black
U.S.	%	24.8%[c]	22.1%	36.9%	23.1%	31.3%	29.1%	52.0%
(3,141)	N	39,343,718	29,161,822	6,187,852	29,389,804	9,953,914	8,260,112	1,226,629
	Base[b]	158,868,436	132,023,308	16,761,234	127,093,931	31,774,505	28,367,386	2,359,203
Northeast	%	23.8%	21.6%	34.7%	23.6%	25.3%	25.1%	37.4%
(217)	N	7,975,817	6,170,721	1,135,566	7,242,318	733,499	710,653	14,010
	Base	33,544,628	28,550,913	3,272,364	30,641,380	2,903,248	2,836,860	37,498
Midwest	%	22.9%	21.4%	34.7%	21.5%	26.4%	26.1%	39.1%
(1,055)	N	8,655,946	7,220,215	1,092,391	5,962,175	2,693,771	2,585,138	51,400
	Base	37,873,006	33,751,700	3,147,680	27,668,787	10,204,219	9,920,834	131,433
West	%	21.4%	17.6%	23.8%	21.2%	23.0%	20.4%	29.6%
(444)	N	7,100,092	4,623,809	380,875	6,061,704	1,038,388	808,965	10,677
	Base	33,115,217	26,241,893	1,599,373	28,595,737	4,519,480	3,971,433	36,095
South	%	28.7%	25.6%[c]	40.9%	25.2%	38.8%	35.7%	53.4%
(1,425)	N	15,611,863	11,147,077	3,579,020	10,123,607	5,488,256	4,155,356	1,150,542
	Base	54,335,585	43,478,802	8,741,817	40,188,027	14,147,558	11,638,259	2,154,177
Black Belt	%	28.8%	23.8%	43.0%[c]	25.8%	39.2%	32.7%	54.4%
(623)	N	8,200,815	4,962,430	2,831,177	5,663,716	2,537,099	1,479,480	1,007,486
	Base	28,440,309	20,889,123	6,584,572	21,969,639	6,470,670	4,518,360	1,851,427
Appalachia	%	31.6%	31.0%	41.4%	27.4%	37.7%	37.1%	50.6%
(404)	N	4,255,809	3,875,990	350,793	2,175,076	2,080,733	1,952,331	115,057
	Base	13,455,328	12,500,441	846,789	7,930,543	5,524,785	5,258,870	227,402

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 9 (also see Figure 14):

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

Percentages and numbers for white and black, metro and nonmetro, and nonmetro white and nonmetro black in this, "...Within the U.S. and Regions," table sum across the rows.

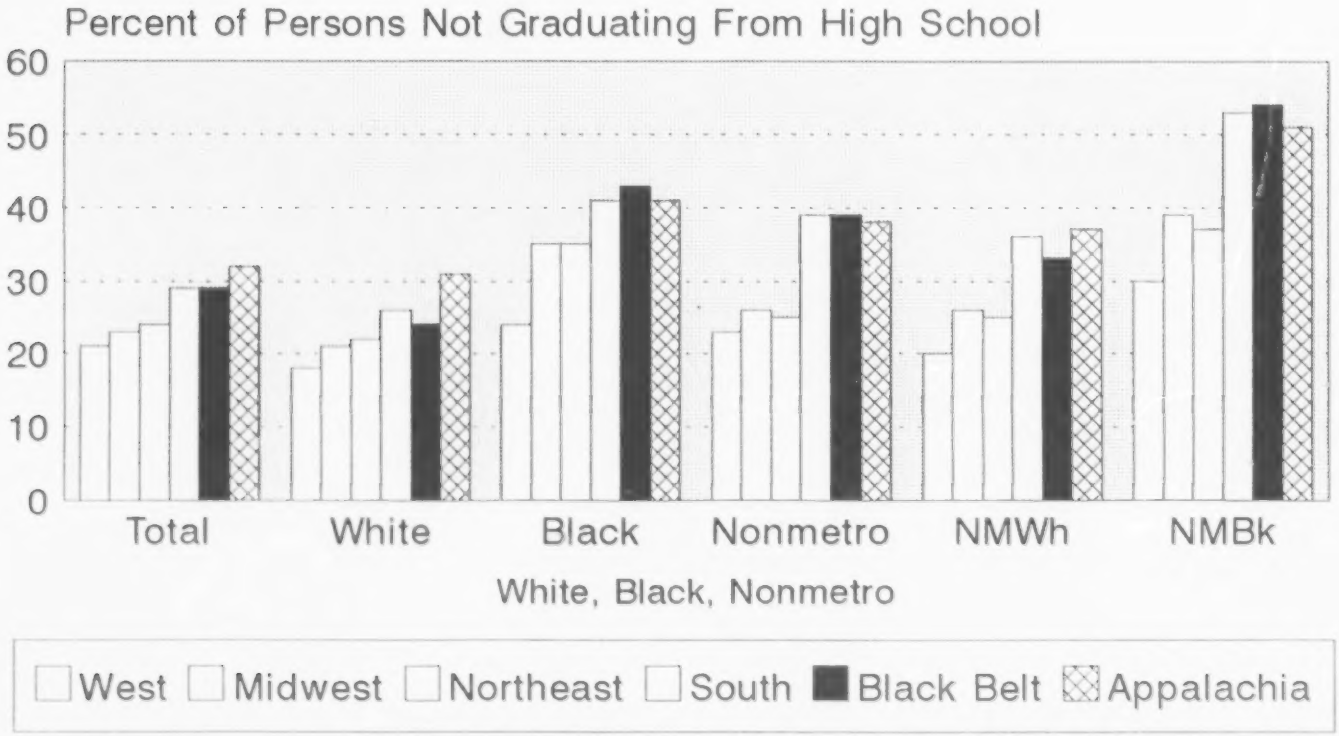
White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

[b]The bases, or denominators for the percentages, are the total numbers of people in the U.S., each region, or each designated subpopulation.

[c]Interpret as follows: 24.8 percent of the U.S. population are not high school graduates; 25.6 percent of southern whites are not high school graduates; 43.0 percent of the blacks in the Black Belt are not high school graduates.

Figure 14. Percent Not Graduating From High School Within U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Shares of Those Not Graduating, Across Regions

Much like the pattern of poverty, the South has 40 percent of the nation's people who have not graduated from high school (Table 10; Figure 15). This is well in excess of the 34 percent share of the U.S. population that lives in the South. The 20 percent of those not graduating and who live in the Northeast is at parity with that region's 20 percent of the U.S. population. The Midwest and West have disproportionately lower percentages of all who fail to graduate than would be expected in comparison for their shares of the populations.

Graduation and race. Not only does the South have nearly 4 of every 10 U.S. residents who have not graduated, it has 38 percent of the whites and 58 percent of all blacks in the United States who did not finish high school (Figure 16). The Black Belt alone, with 40 percent of the nation's African-American population, has 46 percent of the blacks who did not graduate.

Metro/nonmetro residence. The South also holds the national majority, 55 percent, of the nonmetro nongraduates (Figure 17). Also, one-fourth of the nonmetro U.S. residents who did not finish high school live in the Black Belt. This nearly matches the share of nonmetro midwesterners who have not graduated and exceeds those in the Northeast and West combined. The South's metro nongraduates are proportionate to their 34 percent of the total population and higher than other regions.

Half of the nonmetro whites and 94 percent of the nonmetro blacks who do not graduate from high school live in the South (Figure 18). Again, the Black Belt by itself accounts for 82 percent of the nonmetro blacks who have not graduated. Nearly a fourth of the nonmetro whites without high school degrees live in Appalachia while another 17 percent are in the Black Belt.

Therefore, first, we find the South to have the highest rates of failing to graduate from high school. And, second, we find the South to have the disproportionately highest share of the people in the United States who have not successfully completed high school. The African-American, white, and nonmetro subpopulations who have not formally completed high school are found in disproportionate numbers and percentages in the South. And again, race, region, and rurality combine for nonmetro blacks without high school diplomas in the southern, Black Belt subregion.

The Black Belt and Appalachia. The Black Belt has one of five of the nation's people who have not completed high school; the Appalachian Region has one in nine (Figure 19). In comparison with Appalachia, the Black Belt has twice the number of nongraduates: 8 million versus the 4 million. Even among their nonmetro populations that do not graduate, the Black Belt outnumbers Appalachia by nearly one-half million. Among the Black Belt's nonmetro blacks, over a million—82 percent—have not graduated. Black nonmetro nongraduates are essentially absent in Appalachia outside the Black Belt. For the significant population of African-Americans in the Black Belt and South, the educational potential for improving quality of life lags far behind the rest of the nation.

Table 10. People Ages 25 and Older Who Are Not High School Graduates, Across Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Total	White	Black	Metro	Nonmetro	Nonmetro White	Nonmetro Black
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	39,343,718	29,161,822	6,187,852	29,389,804	9,953,914	8,260,112	1,226,629
Northeast	%	20.3%[b]	21.21%	18.4%	24.6%	7.4%	8.6%	1.1%
(217)	N	7,975,817	6,170,721	1,135,566	7,242,318	733,499	710,653	14,010
Midwest	%	22.0%	24.8%	17.7%	20.3%	27.1%	31.3%	4.2%
(1,055)	N	8,655,946	7,220,215	1,092,391	5,962,175	2,693,771	2,585,138	51,400
West	%	18.0%	15.9%	6.2%	20.6%	10.4%	9.8%	0.9%
(444)	N	7,100,092	4,623,809	380,875	6,061,704	1,038,388	808,965	10,677
South	%	39.7%	38.2%[b]	57.8%	34.4%	55.1%	50.3%	93.8%
(1,425)	N	15,611,863	11,147,077	3,579,020	10,123,607	5,488,256	4,155,356	1,150,542
Black Belt	%	20.8%	17.0%	45.8%[b]	19.3%	25.5%	17.9%	82.1%
(623)	N	8,200,815	4,962,430	2,831,177	5,663,716	2,537,099	1,479,480	1,007,486
Appalachia	%	10.8%	13.3%	5.7%	7.4%	20.9%	23.6%	9.4%
(404)	N	4,255,809	3,875,990	350,793	2,175,076	2,080,733	1,952,331	115,057

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 10 (also see Figures 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19):

[a]In this, "...Across Regions," table, the **totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the column sums of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

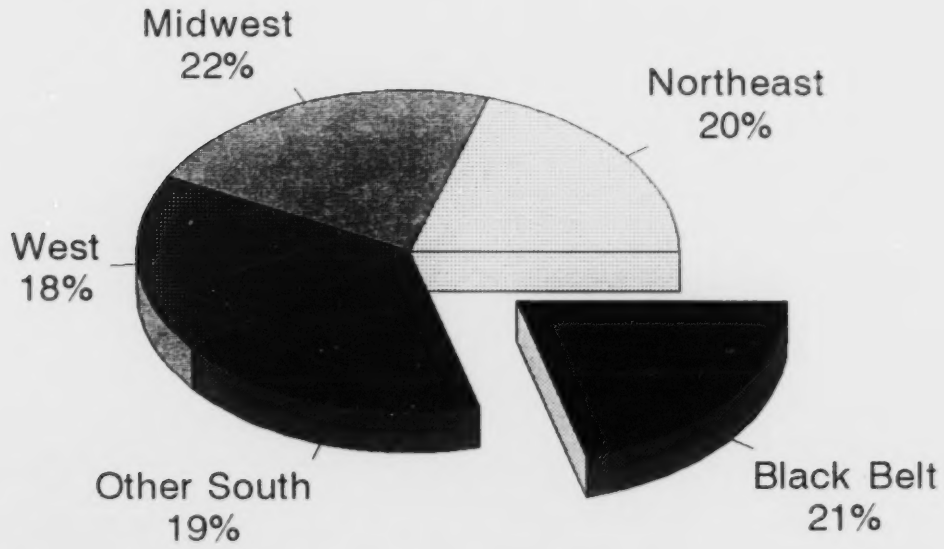
The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

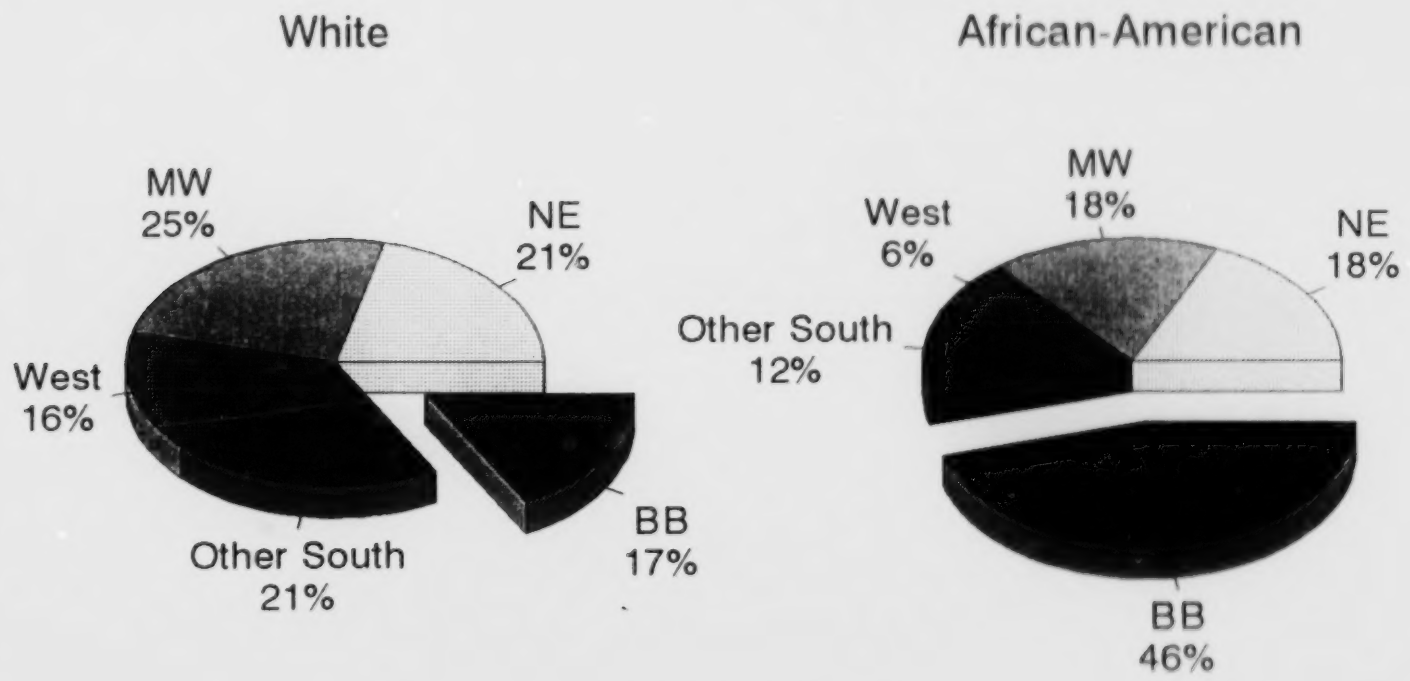
[b]Interpret as follows: 20.3 percent of those who have not graduated from high school live in the Northeast; 38.2 percent of the whites who have not graduated live in the South; 45.8 percent of the blacks who have not graduated live in the Black Belt; etc.

Figure 15. People Not Graduating From High School Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



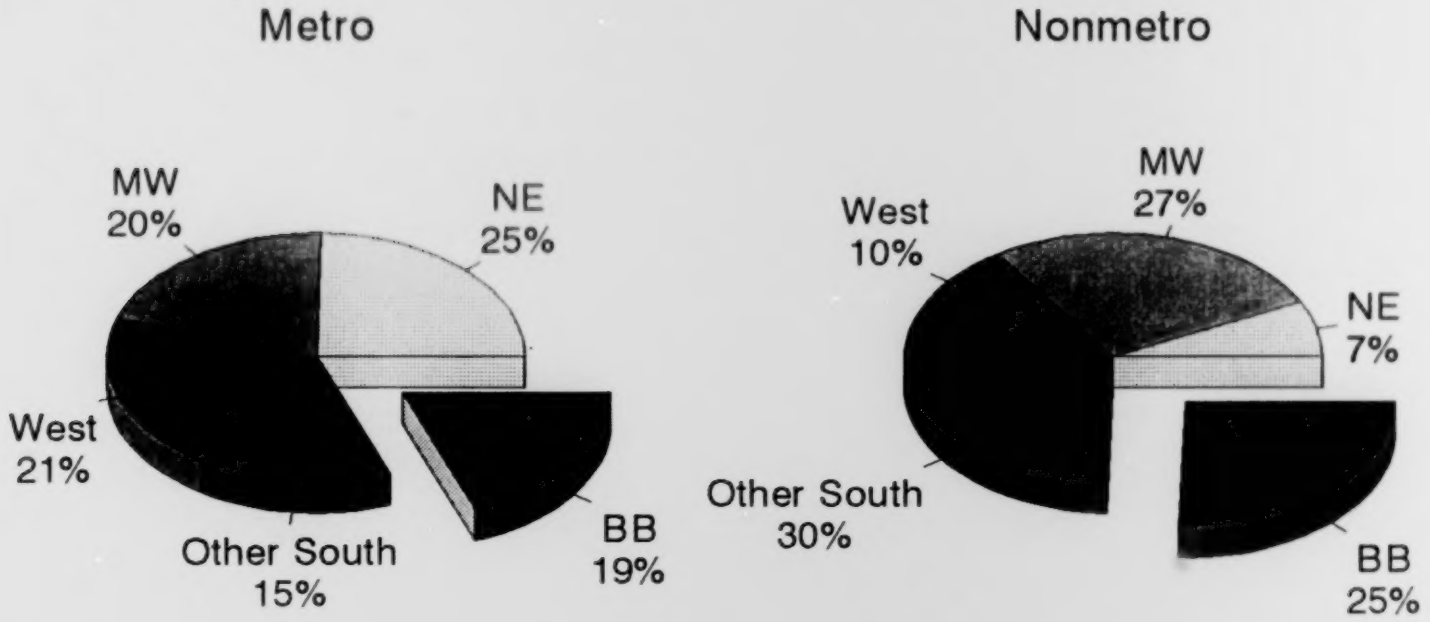
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. Not graduating high school, in millions: U.S. 39.3, West 7.1, MW 8.7, NE 8.0, South 15.6, Black Belt 8.2.

Figure 16. Whites and Blacks Not Graduating From High School Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



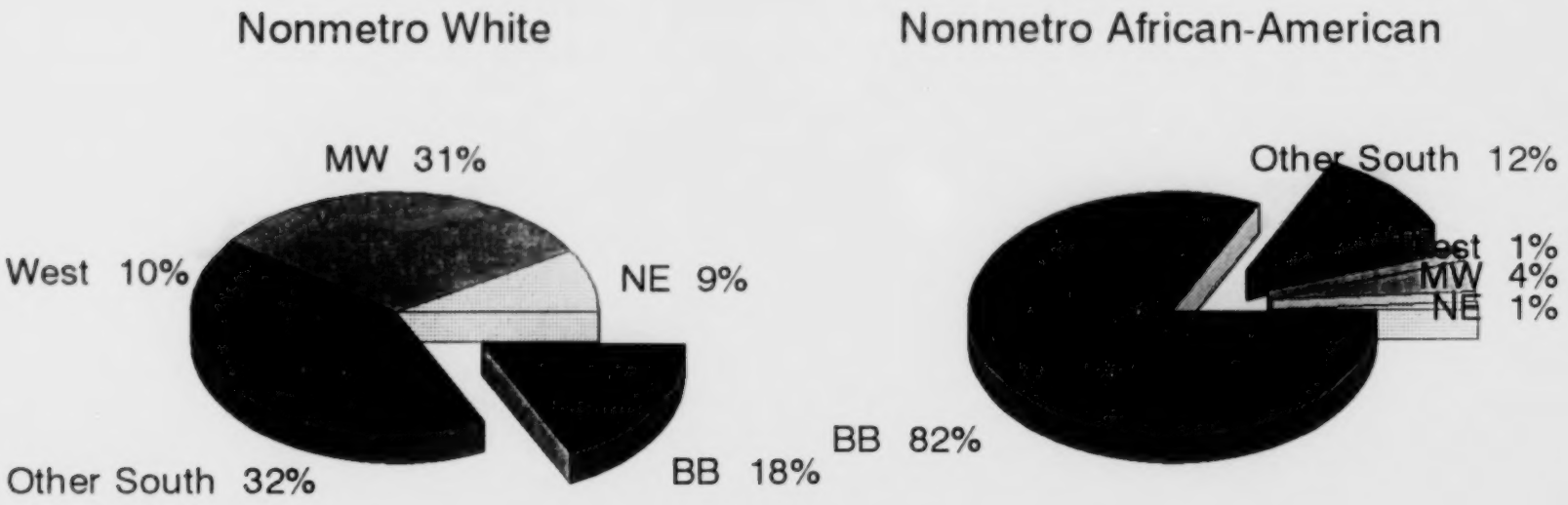
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
In millions, whites not graduating: U.S. 29.2, West 4.6, MW 7.2, NE 6.2, South 11.1, Black Belt 5.0.
African-Americans: U.S. 6.2, West .4, MW 1.1, NE 1.1, South 3.6, Black Belt 2.8.

Figure 17. Metro and Nonmetro Residents Not Graduating From High School Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



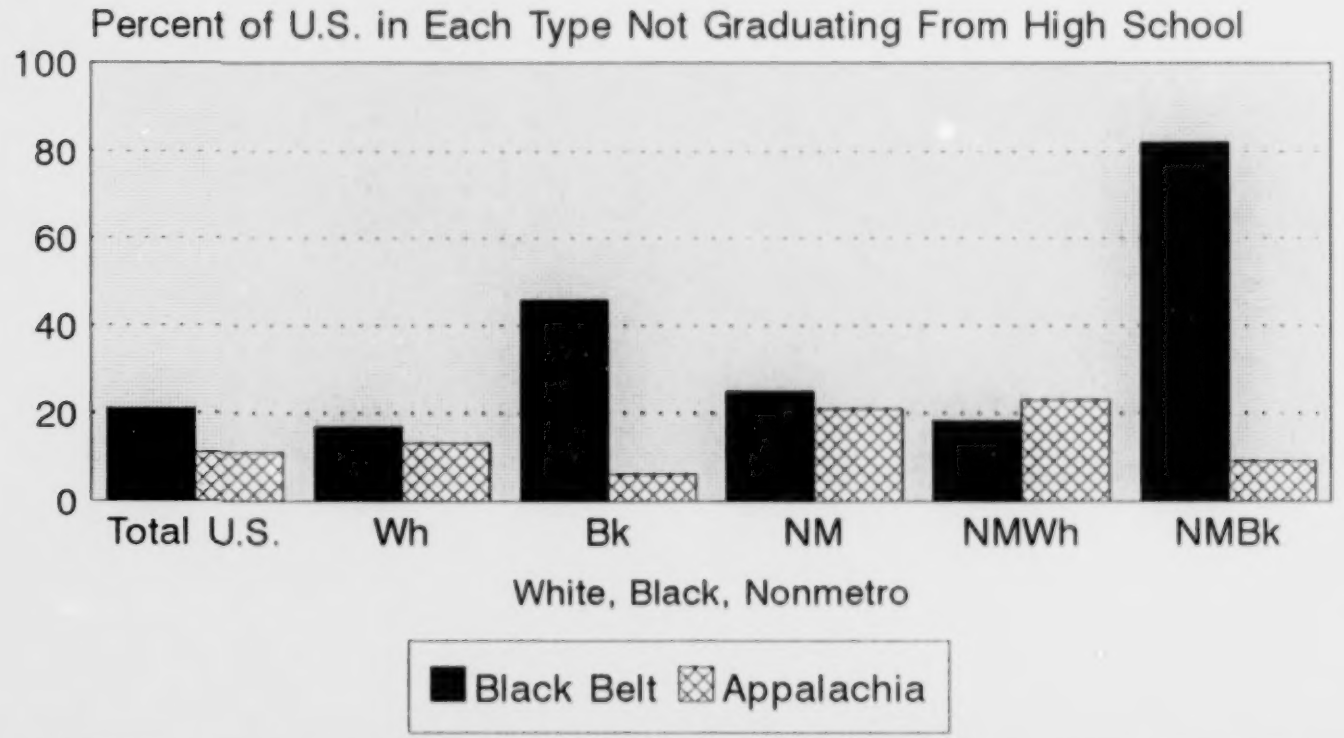
Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro/nonmetro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. In millions, metro and not graduating: U.S. 29.4, West 6.1, MW 6.0, NE 7.2, South 10.1, Black Belt 5.7. Nonmetro: U.S. 10.0, West 1.0, MW 2.7, NE .7, South 5.5, Black Belt 2.5.

Figure 18. Nonmetro Whites and Blacks Not Graduating From High School Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro/nonmetro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. In millions, nonmetro white: U.S. 8.26, West .81, MW 2.59, NE .71, South 4.16, Black Belt 1.48. Nonmetro black: U.S. 1.23, West .01, MW .05, NE .01, South 1.15, Black Belt 1.0.

Figure 19. People Not Graduating From High School Across the Black Belt and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Part V
Unemployment

Employment contributes to a better quality of life. Many, although not all, poor socioeconomic conditions are improved when people have jobs. But even when jobs are available, not everyone can work due to inadequate education and skills, poor health, age, or the responsibility for providing primary care to the dependents in one's household.

And in some cases, employment does not mean satisfactory employment. Mismatches occur when skilled workers can only find lower-level positions and low wages or salaries, when people must take part-time work although full-time work is needed, or when other types of underemployment exist. Also, employment may be unsatisfactory when there are inferior or dangerous working conditions. Still, unemployment generally indicates a poorer socioeconomic, if not physical or social psychological, quality of life.

Official unemployment rates are based on persons aged 16 or older who are actively looking for work but cannot find jobs (U.S. Bureau of Census 1992a, 1995: 396). This removes all of the very young from the nation's workforce base. It also removes the elderly or others who no longer seek employment.

Unemployment Rates Within Regions

Using data from the 1990 U.S. Census, the nation's unemployment rate was 6.3 percent and essentially the same in all major regions (Table 11). In the Black Belt, the unemployment rate rises to 6.6 and in Appalachia to 6.8 (Figure 20).

Unemployment by race. Unemployment rates for African-Americans are higher than for whites in all regions and subregions examined here. Nationally, the white rate is 5.2 percent and the black rate is more than twice as high at 12.9 percent. The black-white disparities are widest in the Midwest and in the Black Belt by ratios of about three to one.

The South's 5.0 percent unemployment rate for whites is the lowest of any of the four major U.S. regions. Furthermore, the lowest unemployment rate found anywhere, 4.6 percent, is for Black Belt whites.

Metro/nonmetro unemployment. Nationally and regionally, nonmetro unemployment runs ahead of metro unemployment everywhere except the Midwest where the metro and nonmetro rates are the same. Northeastern rates are also quite similar for metro and nonmetro areas. Nationally, nonmetro unemployment is 7.0 percent in comparison to 6.2 percent for metro areas. Regionally, nonmetro unemployment is highest in the West at 7.8 percent and second highest in the South at 7.4. This contrasts with the South's lowest regional metro unemployment rate of 5.9 percent and further distinguishes the quality-of-life conditions between the metro and nonmetro South.

As expected from other findings on poverty and education, unemployment rates for nonmetro blacks exceed those nonmetro whites by a factor of about two or more in all regions. For the nonmetro United States, black unemployment is 13.8 percent while it is 6.2 percent among whites. Perhaps surprisingly, the nonmetro Black Belt is as notable for its lowest white unemployment—5.0 percent—as for its high, 13.8 percent African-American unemployment. Appalachia's 7.6 percent is the highest nonmetro, white rate among all regions and subregions.

Actually, the Midwest's nonmetro, black unemployment rate of 16.4 percent and the West's corresponding rate of 14.8 percent exceed the Black Belt's 13.8 percent. Although the actual numbers of midwesterners and westerners involved are but a very small fraction of the number of nonmetro blacks in the Black Belt, the Black Belt's unemployment rates are somewhat lower.

The working poor. Given the South's lower education levels and extensive poverty, one might expect that unemployment rates would be at their highest in the South. However, this is not the case.

Perhaps the lower-than-expected unemployment in the South is at least partly due to underemployment (Lichter 1989; Lichter and Costanzo 1987). In other words, many of the jobs held by the southern workforce are not the good jobs for which many workers might be capable. Also, many of those who are employed may be working at one or more part-time positions that do not add up to whole jobs in terms of income or benefits. Such underemployment situations can leave many workers in poverty, and the South is known for its working poor (Gray 1994; Thompson and Gray, 1995). But officially, the working poor do not count as unemployed.

Another problem with the official measurement of unemployment in the South is that discouraged job-seekers—those who have not actively sought employment in the preceding four weeks—are not counted as members of the eligible workforce. This removes such persons from the numbers used to calculate unemployment rates and causes the rates to be lower. In rural areas where the job opportunities may be fewer and farther, prospective workers might sooner exhaust their prospects. To the extent this occurs, larger numbers of potential workers in the nonmetropolitan South find themselves discouraged but not recognized and counted as unemployed.

Such underemployment and discouraged job-seeker factors may contribute to lower unemployment rates than expected for southern subpopulations, but they do not necessarily explain the unemployment-rate gaps observed between blacks and whites.

Table 11. Unemployed People Ages 16 and Older, Within the U.S. and Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Total	White	Black	Metro	Nonmetro	Nonmetro White	Nonmetro Black
U.S.	%	6.3%[c]	5.2%	12.9%	6.2%	7.0%	6.2%	13.8%
(3,141)	N	7,792,248	5,288,175	1,687,378	6,201,277	1,590,971	1,253,907	224,310
	Base[b]	123,473,450	101,525,736	13,095,181	100,788,190	22,685,260	20,231,652	1,629,146
Northeast	%	6.3%	5.4%	12.6%	6.3%	6.9%	6.8%	11.8%
(217)	N	1,644,612	1,178,230	326,335	1,497,398	147,214	142,489	2,287
	Base	25,956,522	21,936,640	2,586,505	23,818,895	2,137,627	2,096,246	19,396
Midwest	%	6.2%	5.1%	16.8%	6.2%	6.2%	5.9%	16.4%
(1,055)	N	1,854,073	1,366,240	401,198	1,391,537	462,536	430,953	12,597
	Base	29,839,257	26,567,530	2,391,473	22,365,286	7,473,971	7,272,921	76,831
West	%	6.4%	5.5%	11.8%	6.3%	7.8%	6.7%	14.8%
(444)	N	1,693,875	1,123,401	144,984	1,441,405	252,470	190,846	2,653
	Base	26,290,782	20,403,196	1,224,329	23,036,006	3,254,776	2,842,388	17,950
South	%	6.3%	5.0%[c]	11.8%	5.9%	7.4%	6.1%	13.6%
(1,425)	N	2,599,688	1,620,304	814,861	1,870,937	728,751	489,619	206,773
	Base	41,386,889	32,618,370	6,892,874	31,568,003	9,818,886	8,020,097	1,514,969
Black Belt	%	6.6%	4.6%	12.5%[c]	6.3%	7.6%	5.0%	13.8%
(623)	N	1,436,761	725,965	641,324	1,091,644	345,117	159,026	178,983
	Base	21,919,673	15,896,008	5,148,636	17,358,236	4,561,437	3,180,415	1,299,226
Appalachia	%	6.8%	6.4%	12.6%	6.1%	7.9%	7.6%	13.2%
(404)	N	660,354	573,575	79,594	359,116	301,238	276,256	21,772
	Base	9,676,507	8,954,571	631,109	5,847,677	3,828,830	3,632,131	164,474

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 11 (also see Figure 20):

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

Percentages and numbers for white and black, metro and nonmetro, and nonmetro white and nonmetro black in this, "...Within the U.S. and Regions," table sum across the rows.

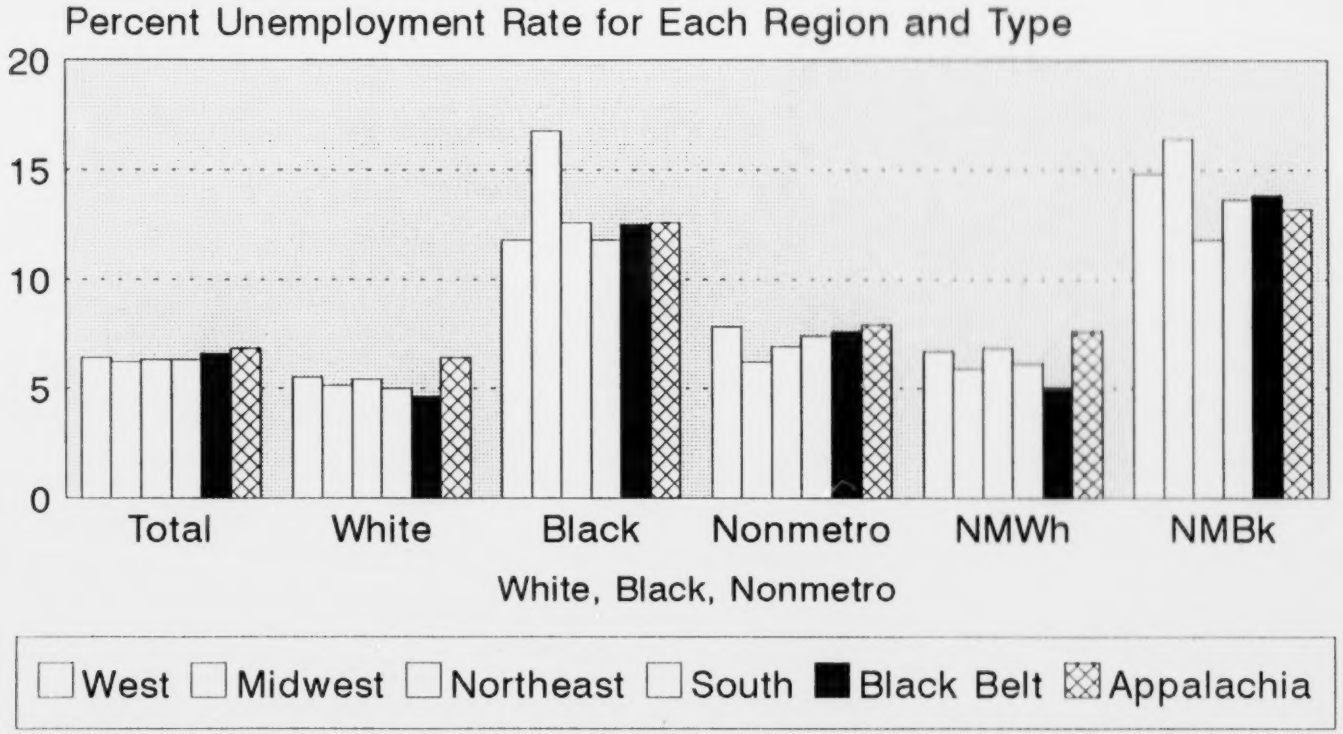
White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

[b]The bases, or denominators for the percentages, are the total numbers of people in the U.S., each region, or each designated subpopulation.

[c]Interpret as follows: 6.3 percent of the population is unemployed; 5.0 percent of the whites living in the South are unemployed; 12.5 percent of the blacks living in the Black Belt are unemployed; etc.

Figure 20. Percent Unemployed Within U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Shares of Unemployment Across Regions

What unemployment rates do not show within the South, the region's share of the nation's unemployment does. Percentagewise, the South has one-third of the nation's unemployment (Table 12; Figure 21) and, as in other major regions, this is about the same as the South's share of the U.S. population in general. If underemployed and discouraged workers were taken into account, however, we suspect that the South's share of the unemployed would further increase.

Although the South's share of the nation's unemployment is within a percentage point of its share of the nation's population, by virtue of the region's larger population the 2.6 million unemployed in the South outnumber the unemployed of any other region. In fact, the South holds from three-quarters of a million to a million more of the unemployed than does any other region (Table 12).

In fact, the Black Belt by itself has nearly as many unemployed people as any of the major U.S. regions outside the South. The 1.4 million unemployed residents of the Black Belt approach the 1.6 to 1.9 million who are unemployed in each of the major nonsouthern regions. This is largely due to the disproportionately large population of unemployed Black Belt blacks.

While the South has the lowest rates of white unemployment, as considered earlier, there are numerically more unemployed whites in the South than in any other region. And the disparity between low white and high black unemployment rates notwithstanding, the Black Belt has more unemployed whites than unemployed blacks.

Unemployment and race. Proportionate to the population of blacks that live in the South, more blacks are unemployed: 40 percent of the black population lives in the South and the region has 38 percent of the unemployed blacks. African-American unemployment in the Midwest is also disproportionately high. Nineteen percent of the U.S. blacks live in the Midwest, and the region has 24 percent of the black unemployment (Figure 22). Black unemployment in the Northeast and West is essentially in balance with the shares of the black population living in each of these regions.

Metro/nonmetro unemployment. Regional shares of metro and nonmetro unemployment are about proportionate to the regional split of

population across the United States (Figure 23). The most noticeable exception is that the Midwest contains 32 percent of the nation's nonmetro people but has only 29 percent of the nonmetro unemployment. Midwestern unemployment, it appears, is more of a problem in its metro areas where all but a few of its African-American population lives.

Like the total nonmetro population and unemployment, the nonmetro populations of whites and blacks closely match their shares of the populations of the regions and subregions. For instance, 91 percent of the nation's African-Americans live in the South as do 92 percent of the unemployed nonmetro blacks (Figure 24).

Note that in the Midwest, West, and Northeast, nearly all unemployed blacks are metropolitan. This is not the case in the South and Black Belt where much of the black unemployment is in nonmetro areas (Tables 11 and 12).

Black Belt and Appalachian Unemployment. The Black Belt accounts for 18 percent of the nation's unemployment, and Appalachia accounts for nearly 9 percent (Figure 25). As officially measured, each subregion's unemployment is at parity with its population size. Similarly, the Black Belt's shares of unemployment for the racial and residential subpopulations are greater than those of Appalachia except for nonmetro whites.

Table 12. Unemployed People Ages 16 and Older, Across Regions[a]

Region (N Counties)		Total	White	Black	Metro	Nonmetro	Nonmetro White	Nonmetro Black
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	7,792,248	5,288,175	1,687,378	6,201,277	1,590,971	1,253,907	224,310
Northeast	%	21.1%[b]	22.3%	19.3%	24.1%	9.3%	11.4%	1.0%
(217)	N	1,644,612	1,178,230	326,335	1,497,398	147,214	142,489	2,287
Midwest	%	23.8%	25.8%	23.8%	22.4%	29.1%	34.4%	5.8%
(1,055)	N	1,854,073	1,366,240	401,198	1,391,537	462,536	430,953	12,597
West	%	21.7%	21.2%	8.6%	23.2%	15.9%	15.2%	1.2%
(444)	N	1,693,875	1,123,401	144,984	1,441,405	252,470	190,846	2,653
South	%	33.4%	30.6%[b]	48.3%	30.2%	45.8%	39.0%	92.2%
(1,425)	N	2,599,688	1,620,304	814,861	1,870,937	728,751	489,619	206,773
Black Belt	%	18.4%	13.7%	38.0%[b]	17.6%	21.7%	12.7%	79.8%
(623)	N	1,436,761	725,965	641,324	1,091,644	345,117	159,026	178,983
Appalachia	%	8.5%	10.8%	4.7%	5.8%	18.9%	22.0%	9.7%
(404)	N	660,354	573,575	79,594	359,116	301,238	276,256	21,772

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 12 (also see Figures 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25):

[a]In this, "...Across Regions," table, the **totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the column sums of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

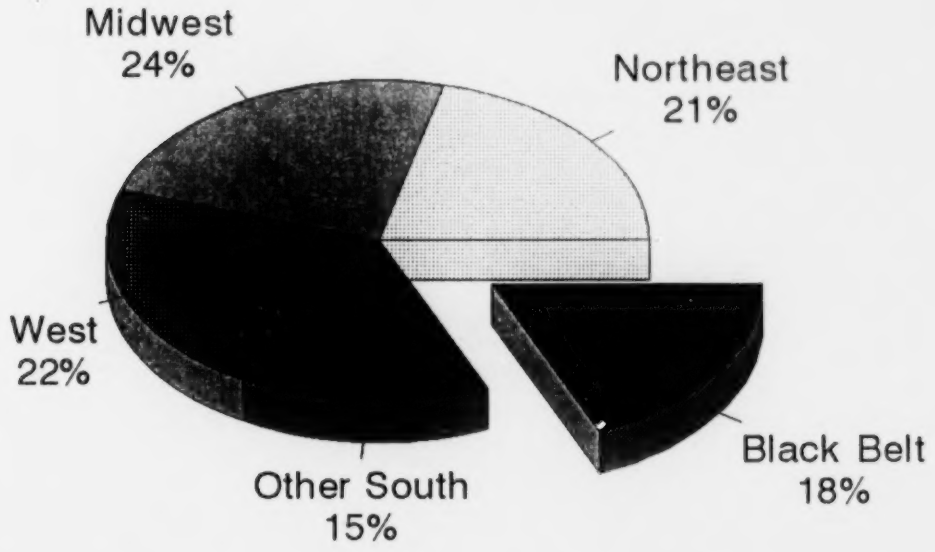
The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

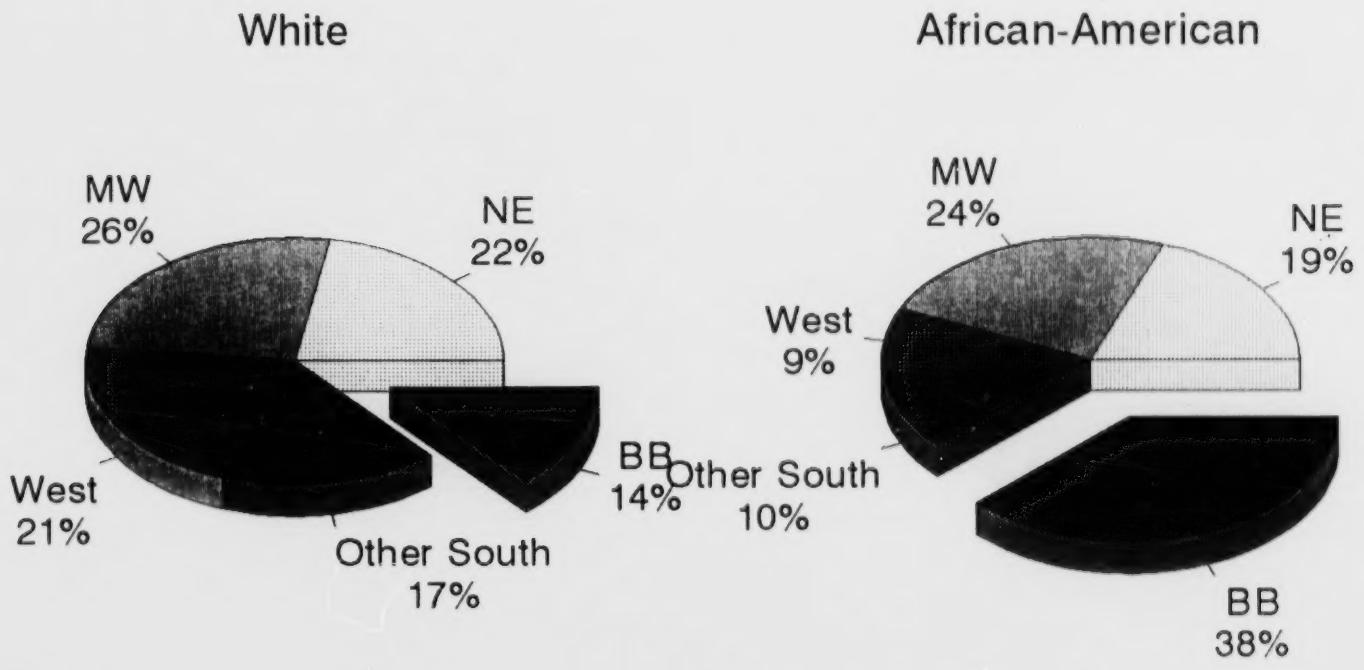
[b]Interpret as follows: 21.1 percent of the unemployed live in the Northeast; 30.6 percent of the unemployed whites live in the South; 38.0 percent of the unemployed blacks live in the Black Belt; etc.

Figure 21. Unemployment Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



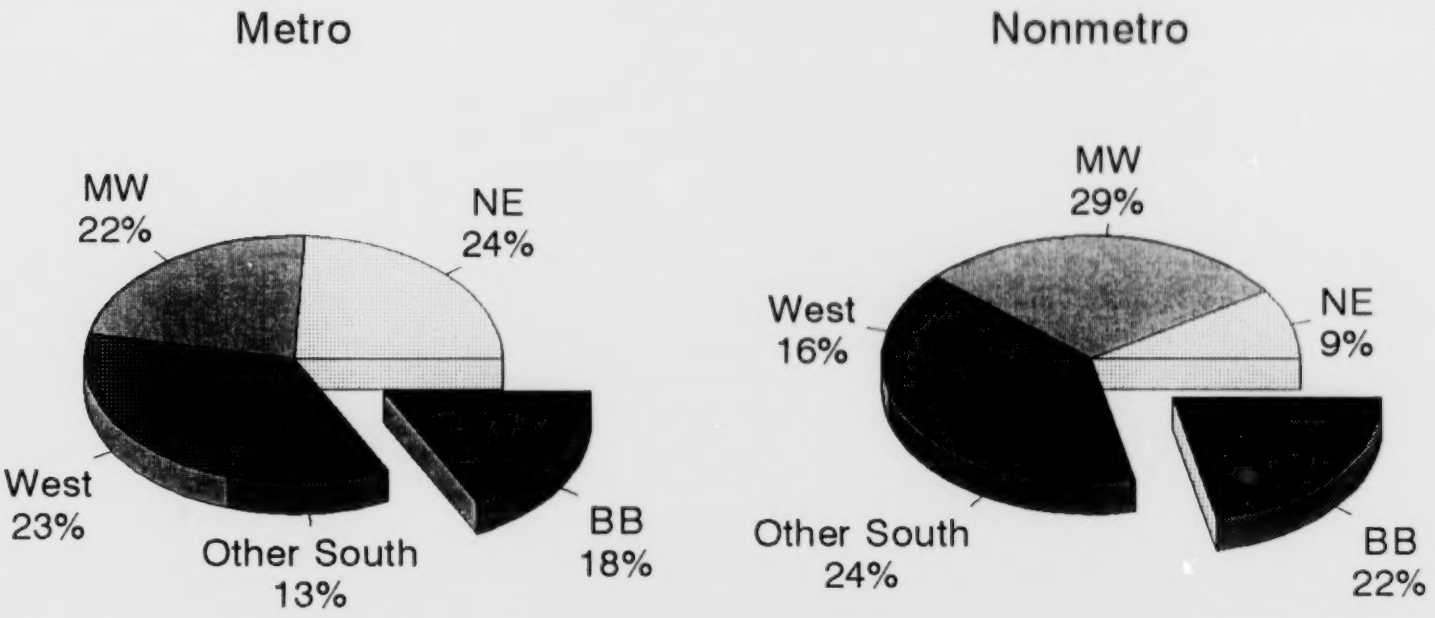
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
U.S. unemployment in millions: U.S. 7.8, West 1.7, MW 1.9, NE 1.6, South 2.6, Black Belt 1.4.

Figure 22. White and Black Unemployment Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



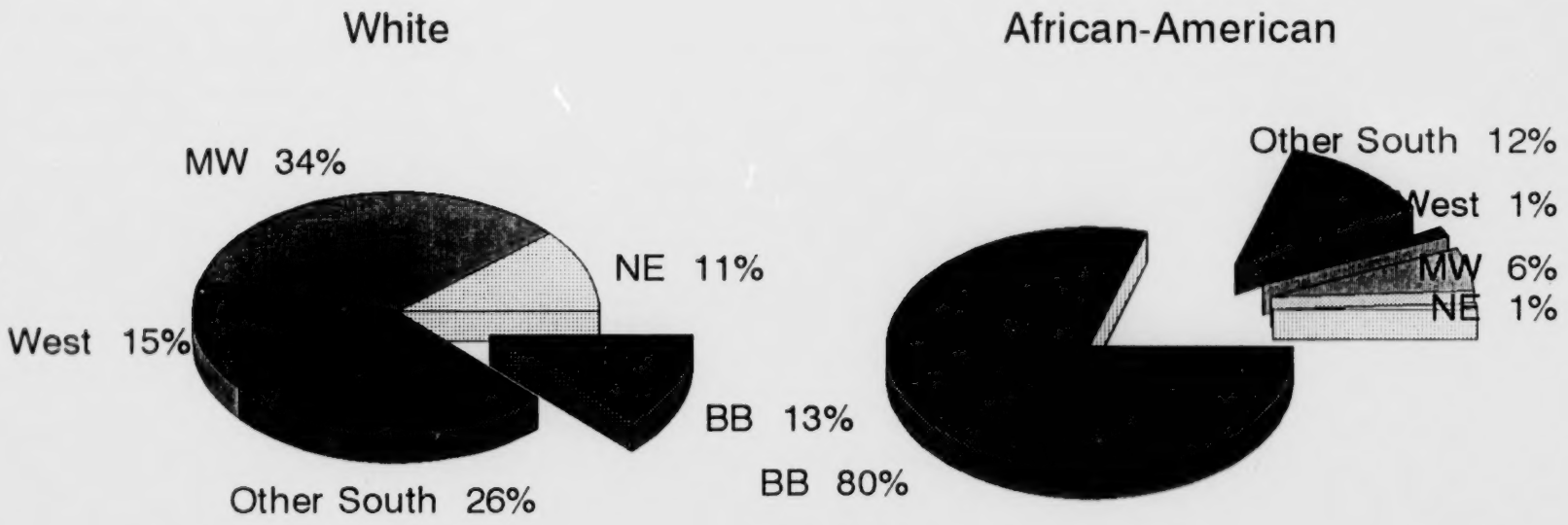
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
In millions, white unemployment: U.S. 5.29, West 1.12, MW 1.37, NE 1.18, South 1.62, Black Belt .73.
African-American: U.S. 1.69, West .14, MW .40, NE .33, South .81, Black Belt .64.

Figure 23. Metro and Nonmetro Unemployment Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



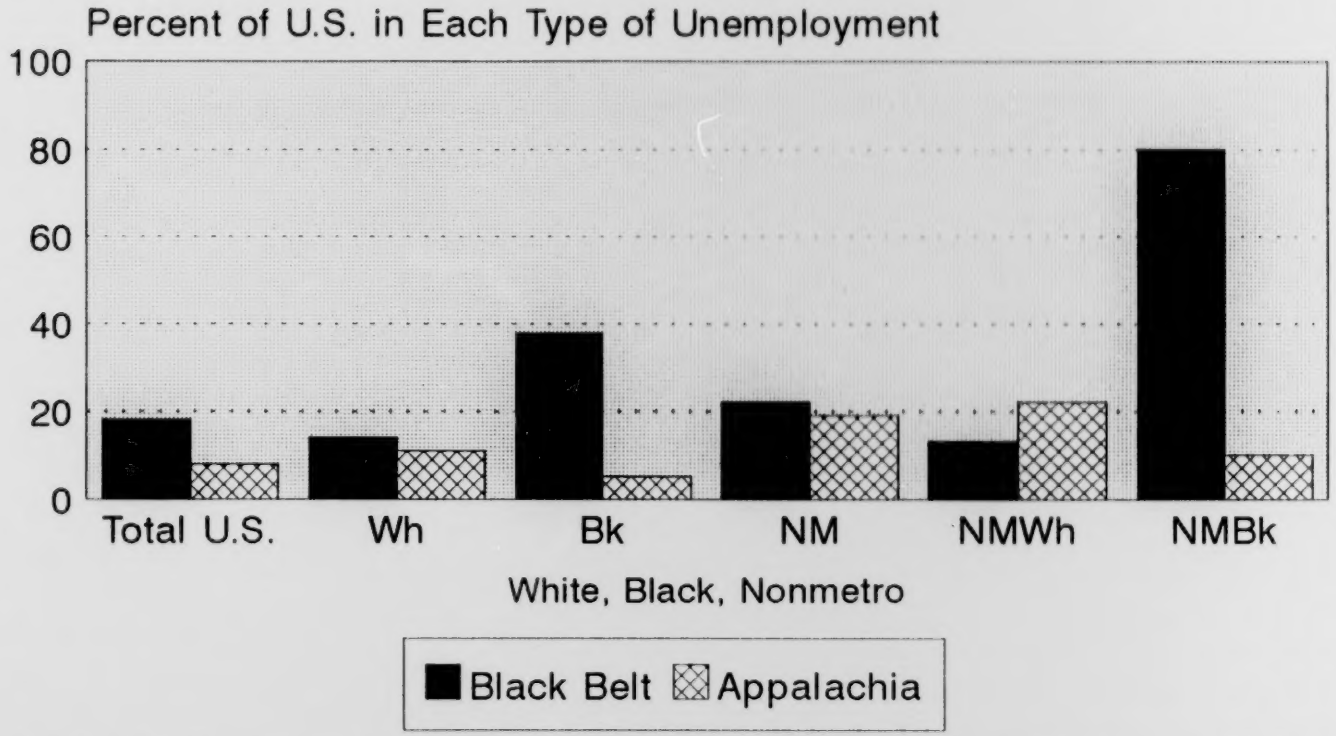
Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro/nonmetro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. In millions, metro unemployment: U.S. 6.20, West 1.44, MW 1.39, NE 1.50, South 1.87, Black Belt 1.09. Nonmetro: U.S. 1.59, West .25, MW .46, NE .15, South .73, Black Belt .35.

Figure 24. Nonmetro White and Black Unemployment Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro/nonmetro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. In mils., nonmet white unemp.: U.S. 1.254, West .191, MW .431, NE .142, So. .490, BB .159. Black: U.S. .224, West .003, MW .013 NE .002, So. .207, BB .179. White total <100% due to rounding.

Figure 25. Unemployment Across the Black Belt and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Part VI.
Dependence

Dependence is rarely included in analyses of quality of life. Only one researcher, Moland (1981), used dependence to study rural quality of life and that was for the 1950 to 1970 period. More recently, we have used the concept in a series of 1980 and 1990 analyses on the South and Black Belt in national context (Morris 1994; Morris and Wimberley 1994, 1997; Wimberley and Morris 1993, 1997; Wimberley, Morris, and Bachtel 1991, 1992).

Dependence may be social, economic, or physical/health related (Wimberley and Morris 1997). Dependence occurs when a person, household, or community must rely on others for basic needs. An important form of social dependence is age-related, or demographic, dependence. The young and the elderly are not normally part of the active, working-aged population. Instead, nearly all children and many elderly adults rely on others for their basic support.

As the number of dependents increases relative to the active or productive population, the burden of dependence increases, and resources are spread more thinly over larger numbers of dependents in a household or community. An income of $30,000, for instance, buys more for a family with few dependents than for a family with many dependents. This thinning of family resources becomes ever more crucial when the resources are low.

Age-related dependence is measured as a ratio of the dependent aged population—children, elders, or both—per 100 of working age. Children are defined as below 18 years of age. Elders are 65 or older. The working-aged population includes those from 18 through 64 years old. Of course, some of working age do not contribute to the support of their families or households and may be dependent themselves due to other social, economic, or physical factors. Still, age-related dependence ratios provide a useful measure of dependence that can be compared across populations and subpopulations.

U.S. and Regional Dependence Ratios

The dependence ratio for the overall U.S. population is 62 age-dependents per 100 of working age. This rounded total is further broken into elder dependence at 20 per 100, and youth dependence at 41 per 100 (Table 13; Figure 26). In general, youth dependence ratios run about twice those for elder dependence regardless of region.

Total dependence is somewhat lower in the Northeast and West while being higher in the Midwest and South. The ratios show the West to have the least elder dependence, but the West ties with the Midwest for the most youth dependence. In contrast, the Northeast has the least youth dependence and the highest elder dependence of the four major U.S. regions. Such regional variations indicate differing regional-level needs for services among elders or youths.

Racial dependence ratios. Although the ratios for the Black Belt and Appalachia resemble those for the nation and the South, they conceal notable differences by race and place of residence. Racially, blacks have higher dependence ratios than do whites (Table 13; Figure 27). Comparisons of dependence ratios for whites and blacks further reveal higher elder dependence among whites and much higher youth dependence among blacks. Overall, any lesser dependence from black elders is more than compensated by black youths.

Metro/nonmetro dependence ratios. Nonmetro residents have higher dependence levels than metro residents in all regions and subregions (Table 13; Figure 28). Furthermore, the higher elder ratios for whites hold across regions and subregions for metro and nonmetro inhabitants (Figure 29). The same is true for higher youth dependence among blacks in metro areas and in the nonmetro South, Black Belt, and Appalachia. Recall that African-American poverty rates are also lower in the nonmetro Northeast, Midwest, and West where we now also observe the lowest black dependence ratios. Furthermore, black youths are relatively absent in the nonmetro Northeast, Midwest, and West.

These findings point to a basic, structural reason why poverty may be higher for African-Americans in the South and in its Black Belt and Appalachian subregions. The reason is that high levels of dependence burden nonmetro blacks. With more black youths for whom to care, relative to people of caregiving age, modest household resources dilute further into poverty-level conditions. This is compounded in regions with larger ratios and numbers of dependent black youths.

Table 13. Numbers and Ratios of Total, Elder, and Youth Age-Dependents, Within the U.S. and Regions[a]

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	Ratio	62[c]	20	41	61	22	38	68	14	54
(3,141)	N	94,846,263	31,241,831	63,604,432	75,480,202	27,851,973	47,628,229	12,092,966	2,508,551	9,584,414
	Base[b]	153,863,610			124,205,868			17,893,094		
Northeast	Ratio	59	22	37	59	24	35	60	13	47
(217)	N	18,908,163	6,995,156	11,913,007	15,680,753	6,409,025	9,271,728	2,111,271	454,809	1,656,462
	Base	31,901,066			26,388,151			3,501,951		
Midwest	Ratio	64	21	43	64	23	41	71	14	56
(1,055)	N	23,363,913	7,749,130	15,614,783	20,233,623	7,205,491	13,028,132	2,363,609	474,957	1,888,652
	Base	36,304,719			31,784,334			3,352,331		
West	Ratio	60	18	43	60	20	39	60	11	49
(444)	N	19,841,627	5,773,363	14,068,264	14,928,296	5,065,409	9,862,887	1,065,085	192,610	872,475
	Base	32,944,455			25,088,714			1,762,925		
South	Ratio	62	20	42	60	22[c]	38	71	15	56
(1,425)	N	32,732,560	10,724,182	22,008,378	24,637,530	9,172,048	15,465,482	6,553,001	1,386,175	5,166,826
	Base	52,713,370			40,944,669			9,275,887		
Black Belt	Ratio	62	19	42	58	22	36	73	15	58[c]
(623)	N	17,247,402	5,418,326	11,829,076	11,475,876	4,297,450	7,178,426	5,102,218	1,059,556	4,042,662
	Base	28,002,913			19,855,217			6,986,422		
Appalachia	Ratio	63	23	40	63	24	39	71	18	54
(404)	N	8,023,173	2,955,828	5,067,345	7,325,614	2,791,601	4,534,013	628,481	157,218	741,263
	Base	12,678,708			11,668,702			879,615		

See notes at end of table.

Table 13. Continued: Metro Dependence Ratios

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	Ratio	59	19	40	58	21	37	66	13	52
(3,141)	N	74,023,479	23,826,012	50,197,467	57,501,891	21,031,974	36,469,917	10,157,203	2,034,704	8,122,499
	Base	124,559,178			98,501,721			15,476,626		
Northeast	Ratio	59	22	37	59	24	34	61	13	47
(217)	N	17,129,125	6,342,412	10,786,713	13,940,378	5,761,685	8,178,693	2,091,261	451,354	1,639,907
	Base	29,164,515			23,735,911			3,454,560		
Midwest	Ratio	61	19	42	60	20	39	71	14	57
(1,055)	N	16,576,667	5,201,640	11,375,027	13,678,213	4,691,509	8,986,704	2,272,781	455,162	1,817,619
	Base	27,133,528			22,947,904			3,197,636		
West	Ratio	58	17	42	58	20	38	61	11	50
(444)	N	16,782,169	4,837,495	11,944,674	12,340,304	4,198,575	8,141,729	1,041,814	188,848	852,966
	Base	28,705,053			21,456,128			1,718,105		
South	Ratio	59	19	41	58	21	37	67	13	54
(1,425)	N	23,535,518	7,444,465	16,091,053	17,542,996	6,380,205	11,162,791	4,751,347	939,340	3,812,007
	Base	39,556,082			30,361,778			7,106,325		
Black Belt	Ratio	59	18	41	56	21	35	69	13	56
(623)	N	12,897,201	3,959,052	8,938,149	8,771,544	3,229,336	5,542,208	3,531,107	677,319	2,853,788
	Base	21,887,944			15,722,656			5,122,952		
Appalachia	Ratio	62	23	39	61	24	37	69	17	52
(404)	N	4,598,681	1,712,404	2,886,277	4,107,784	1,597,123	2,510,661	446,518	111,232	335,286
	Base	7,477,299			6,749,364			644,345		

See notes at end of table.

Table 13. Continued: Nonmetro Dependence Ratios

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	Ratio	71	25	46	70	27	43	80	20	60
(3,141)	N	20,822,784	7,415,819	13,406,965	17,978,311	6,819,999	11,158,312	1,935,763	473,847	1,461,916
	Base	29,304,432			25,704,147			2,416,468		
Northeast	Ratio	65	24	41	66	24	41	42	7	35
(217)	N	1,779,038	652,744	1,126,294	1,740,375	647,340	1,093,035	20,010	3,455	16,555
	Base	2,736,551			2,652,240			47,391		
Midwest	Ratio	74	28	46	74	28	46	59	13	46
(1,055)	N	6,787,246	2,547,490	4,239,756	6,555,410	2,513,982	4,041,428	90,828	19,795	71,033
	Base	9,171,191			8,836,430			154,695		
West	Ratio	72	22	50	71	24	47	52	8	44
(444)	N	3,059,458	935,868	2,123,590	2,587,992	866,834	1,721,158	23,271	3,762	19,509
	Base	4,239,402			3,632,586			44,820		
South	Ratio	70	25	45	67	26	41	83	21	62
(1,425)	N	9,197,042	3,279,717	5,917,325	7,094,534	2,791,843	4,302,691	1,801,654	446,835	1,354,819
	Base	13,157,288			10,582,891			2,169,562		
Black Belt	Ratio	71	24	47	65	26	40	84	21	64
(623)	N	4,350,201	1,459,274	2,890,927	2,704,332	1,068,114	1,636,218	1,571,111	382,237	1,188,874
	Base	6,114,969			4,132,561			1,863,470		
Appalachia	Ratio	66	24	42	65	24	41	77	20	58
(404)	N	3,424,492	1,243,424	2,181,068	3,217,830	1,194,478	2,023,352	181,963	45,986	135,977
	Base	5,201,409			4,919,338			235,270		

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 13 (also see Figures 26, 27, 28, and 29):

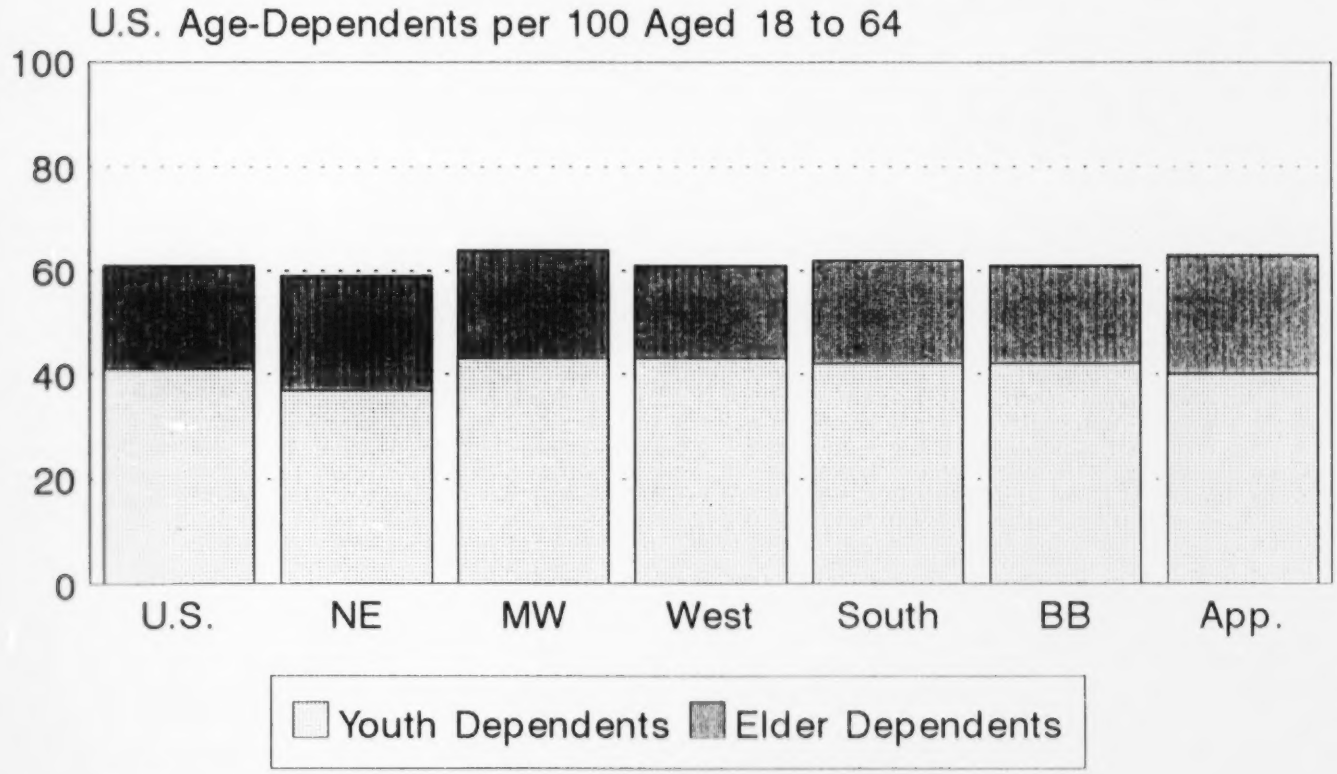
[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

[b]The bases for the total, elder, and youth age-dependence ratios are the respective numbers of the total population, whites, or blacks aged 18 through 64. This also applies to each region and each metro/nonmetro subpopulation.

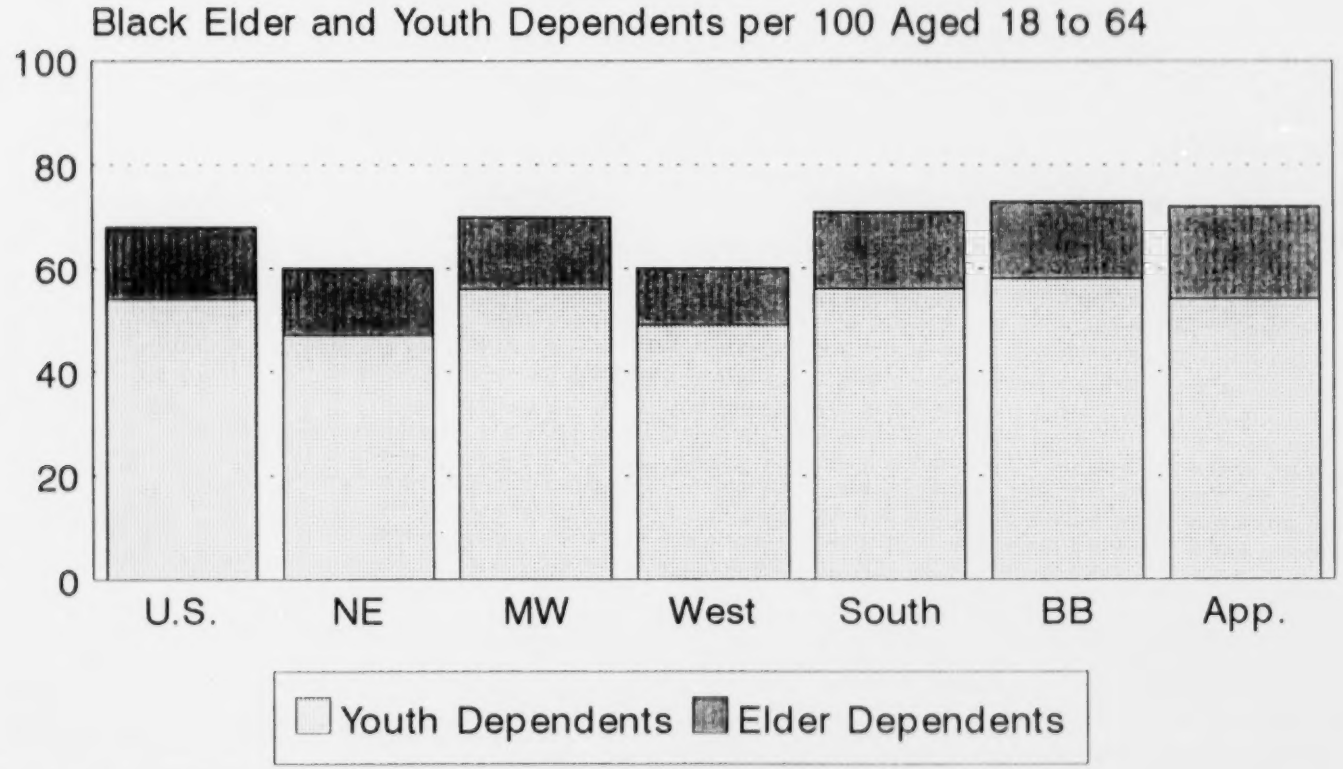
[c]Interpret as follows: there are 62 elder and youth age-dependents per 100 people of ages 18 through 64; in the South, there are 22 white elder age-dependents per 100 whites of ages 18 through 64; in the Black Belt, there are 58 black youth age-dependents per 100 blacks of ages 18 through 64; etc.

Figure 26. Age-Dependence Ratios for U.S. Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



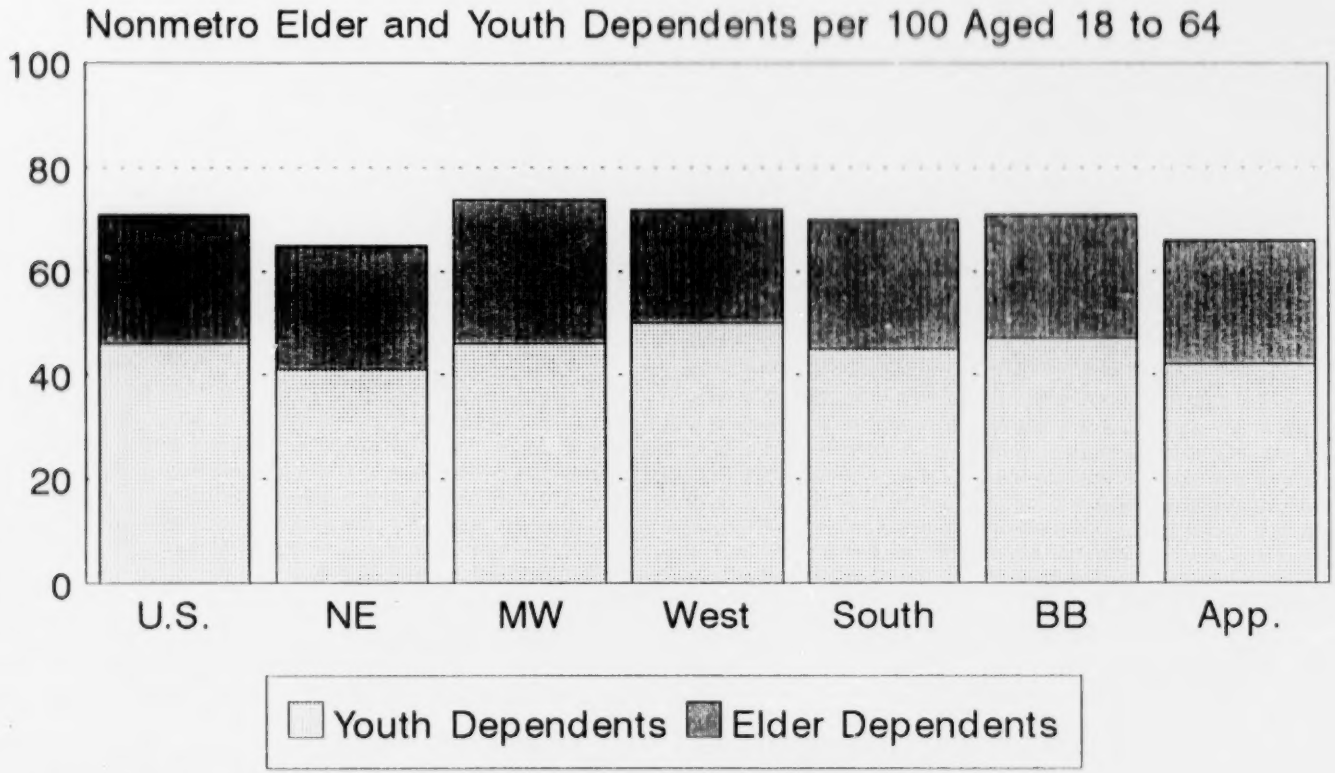
Source: Compiled from 1990 U.S. Census by Wimberley and Morris.
Elder dependents are 65 or older; youth dependents are less than 18.

Figure 27. African-American Age-Dependence Ratios for U.S., Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



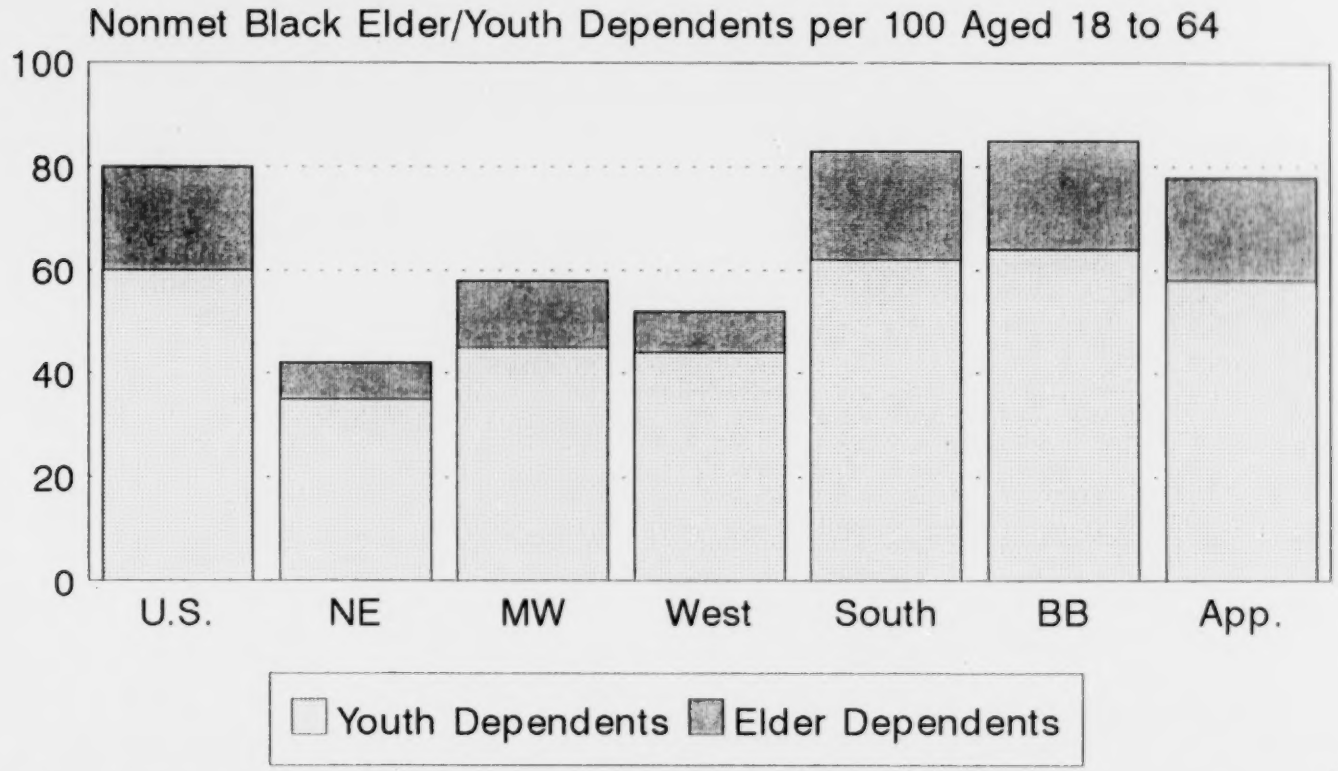
Source: Compiled from 1990 U.S. Census by Wimberley and Morris.
Elder dependents are 65 or older; youth dependents are less than 18.

Figure 28. Nonmetro Age-Dependence Ratios for U.S., Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: Compiled from 1990 U.S. Census by Wimberley and Morris.
Elder dependents are 65 or older; youth dependents are less than 18.

Figure 29. Nonmetro, African-American, Age-Dependence Ratios For U.S., Regions, the Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: Compiled from 1990 U.S. Census by Wimberley and Morris.
Elder dependents are 65 or older; youth dependents are less than 18.

Percentages of Elders and Youths Within Regions

Percentages of elders and youths provide an alternative to ratios as a technique for looking at age-dependence (Table 14; Figures 30 and 31). As with ratios, the percentages of white youths are consistently about twice as large as the percentages of white elderly for all regions and subregions. And for blacks, the percentages of youths are often three or four times greater than the percentages of elders. In addition to lower life expectancies, the age structure of the African-American population contributes to the percentage of black youths who are dependent.

Also, nonmetro areas are observed to have higher percentages of both elders and youths than do metro areas.

Table 14. Total, Elder, and Youth Age-Dependents, Within the U.S. and Regions[a]

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	%	38.1%[c]	12.6%	25.6%	37.8%	13.9%	23.9%	40.3%	8.4%	32.0%
(3,141)	N	94,846,263	31,241,831	63,604,432	75,480,202	27,851,973	47,628,229	12,092,966	2,508,551	9,584,415
	Base[b]	248,709,873			199,686,070			29,986,060		
Northeast	%	37.2%	13.8%	23.4%	37.3%	15.2%	22.0%	37.6%	8.1%	29.5%
(217)	N	18,908,163	6,995,156	11,913,007	15,680,753	6,409,025	9,271,728	2,111,271	454,809	1,656,462
	Base	50,809,229			42,068,904			5,613,222		
Midwest	%	39.2%	13.0%	26.2%	38.9%	13.9%	25.0%	41.4%	8.3%	33.0%
(1,055)	N	23,363,913	7,749,130	15,614,783	20,233,623	7,205,491	13,028,132	2,363,609	474,957	1,888,652
	Base	59,668,632			52,017,957			5,715,940		
West	%	37.6%	10.9%	26.7%	37.3%	12.7%	24.7%	37.7%	6.8%	30.9%
(444)	N	19,841,627	5,773,363	14,068,264	14,928,296	5,065,409	9,862,887	1,065,085	192,610	872,475
	Base	52,786,082			40,007,010			2,828,010		
South	%	38.3%	12.6%	25.8%	37.6%	14.0%[c]	23.6%	41.4%	8.8%	32.6%
(1,425)	N	32,732,560	10,724,182	22,008,378	24,637,530	9,172,048	15,465,482	6,553,001	1,386,175	5,166,826
	Base	85,445,930			65,582,199			15,828,888		
Black Belt	%	38.1%	12.0%	26.1%	36.6%	13.7%	22.9%	42.2%	8.8%	33.4%[c]
(623)	N	17,247,402	5,418,326	11,829,076	11,475,876	4,297,450	7,178,426	5,102,218	1,059,556	4,042,662
	Base	45,250,315			31,331,093			12,088,640		
Appalachia	%	38.8%	14.3%	24.5%	38.6%	14.7%	23.9%	41.7%	10.4%	31.2%
(404)	N	8,023,173	2,955,828	5,067,345	7,325,614	2,791,601	4,534,013	628,481	157,218	471,263
	Base	20,701,881			18,994,316			1,508,096		

See notes at end of table.

Table 14. Continued: Metro Age-Dependents Within Regions

Table 14. Continued: Metro Age-Dependents, Within Regions

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	%	37.3%	12.0%	25.3%	36.9%	13.5%	23.4%	39.6%	7.9%	31.7%
(3,141)	N	74,023,479	23,826,012	50,197,467	57,501,891	21,031,974	36,469,917	10,157,203	2,034,704	8,122,499
	Base	198,582,657			156,003,612			25,633,829		
Northeast	%	37.0%	13.7%	23.3%	37.0%	15.3%	21.7%	37.7%	8.1%	29.6%
(217)	N	17,129,125	6,342,412	10,786,713	13,940,378	5,761,685	8,178,693	2,091,261	451,354	1,639,907
	Base	46,293,640			37,676,289			5,545,821		
Midwest	%	37.9%	11.9%	26.0%	37.4%	12.8%	24.5%	41.6%	8.3%	33.2%
(1,055)	N	16,576,667	5,201,640	11,375,027	13,678,213	4,691,509	8,986,704	2,272,781	455,162	1,817,619
	Base	43,710,195			36,626,117			5,470,417		
West	%	36.9%	10.6%	26.3%	36.5%	12.4%	24.1%	37.8%	6.8%	30.9%
(444)	N	16,782,169	4,837,495	11,944,674	12,340,304	4,198,575	8,141,729	1,041,814	188,848	852,966
	Base	45,487,222			33,796,432			2,759,919		
South	%	37.3%	11.8%	25.5%	36.6%	13.3%	23.3%	40.1%	7.9%	32.2%
(1,425)	N	23,535,518	7,444,465	16,091,053	17,542,996	6,380,205	11,162,791	4,751,347	939,340	3,812,007
	Base	63,091,600			47,904,774			11,857,672		
Black Belt	%	37.1%	11.4%	25.7%	35.8%	13.2%	22.6%	40.8%	7.8%	33.0%
(623)	N	12,897,201	3,959,052	8,938,149	8,771,544	3,229,336	5,542,208	3,531,107	677,319	2,853,788
	Base	34,785,145			24,494,200			8,654,059		
Appalachia	%	38.1%	14.2%	23.9%	37.8%	14.7%	23.1%	40.9%	10.2%	30.7%
(404)	N	4,598,681	1,712,404	2,886,277	4,107,784	1,597,123	2,510,661	446,518	111,232	335,286
	Base	12,075,980			10,857,148			1,090,863		

See notes at end of table.

Table 14. Continued: Nonmetro Age-Dependents, Within Regions

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	%	41.5%	14.8%	26.8%	41.2%	15.6%	25.5%	44.5%	10.9%	33.8%
(3,141)	N	20,822,784	7,415,819	13,406,965	17,978,311	6,819,999	11,158,312	1,935,763	473,847	1,461,916
	Base	50,127,216			43,682,458			4,352,231		
Northeast	%	39.4%	14.5%	24.9%	39.6%	14.7%	24.9%	29.7%	5.1%	24.6%
(217)	N	1,779,038	652,744	1,126,294	1,740,375	647,340	1,093,035	20,010	3,455	16,555
	Base	4,515,589			4,392,615			67,401		
Midwest	%	42.5%	16.0%	26.6%	42.6%	16.3%	26.3%	37.0%	8.1%	28.9%
(1,055)	N	6,787,246	2,547,490	4,239,756	6,555,410	2,513,982	4,041,428	90,828	19,795	71,033
	Base	15,958,437			15,391,840			245,523		
West	%	41.9%	12.8%	29.1%	41.6%	13.9%	27.7%	34.2%	5.5%	28.7%
(444)	N	3,059,458	935,868	2,123,590	2,587,992	866,834	1,721,158	23,271	3,762	19,509
	Base	7,298,860			6,220,578			68,091		
South	%	41.1%	14.7%	26.5%	40.1%	15.8%	24.3%	45.4%	11.3%	34.1%
(1,425)	N	9,197,042	3,279,717	5,917,325	7,094,534	2,791,843	4,302,691	1,801,654	446,835	1,354,819
	Base	22,354,330			17,677,425			3,971,216		
Black Belt	%	41.6%	13.9%	27.6%	39.6%	15.6%	23.9%	45.7%	11.1%	34.6%
(623)	N	4,350,201	1,459,274	2,890,927	2,704,332	1,068,114	1,636,218	1,571,111	382,237	1,188,874
	Base	10,465,170			6,836,893			3,434,581		
Appalachia	%	39.7%	14.4%	25.3%	39.5%	14.7%	24.9%	43.6%	11.0%	32.6%
(404)	N	3,424,492	1,243,424	2,181,068	3,217,830	1,194,478	2,023,352	181,963	45,986	135,977
	Base	8,625,901			8,137,168			417,233		

See table notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 14 (also see Figures 30 and 31):

[a]**Totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

Percentages and numbers for white and black, metro and nonmetro, and nonmetro white and nonmetro black in this, "...Within the U.S. and Regions," table sum across the rows.

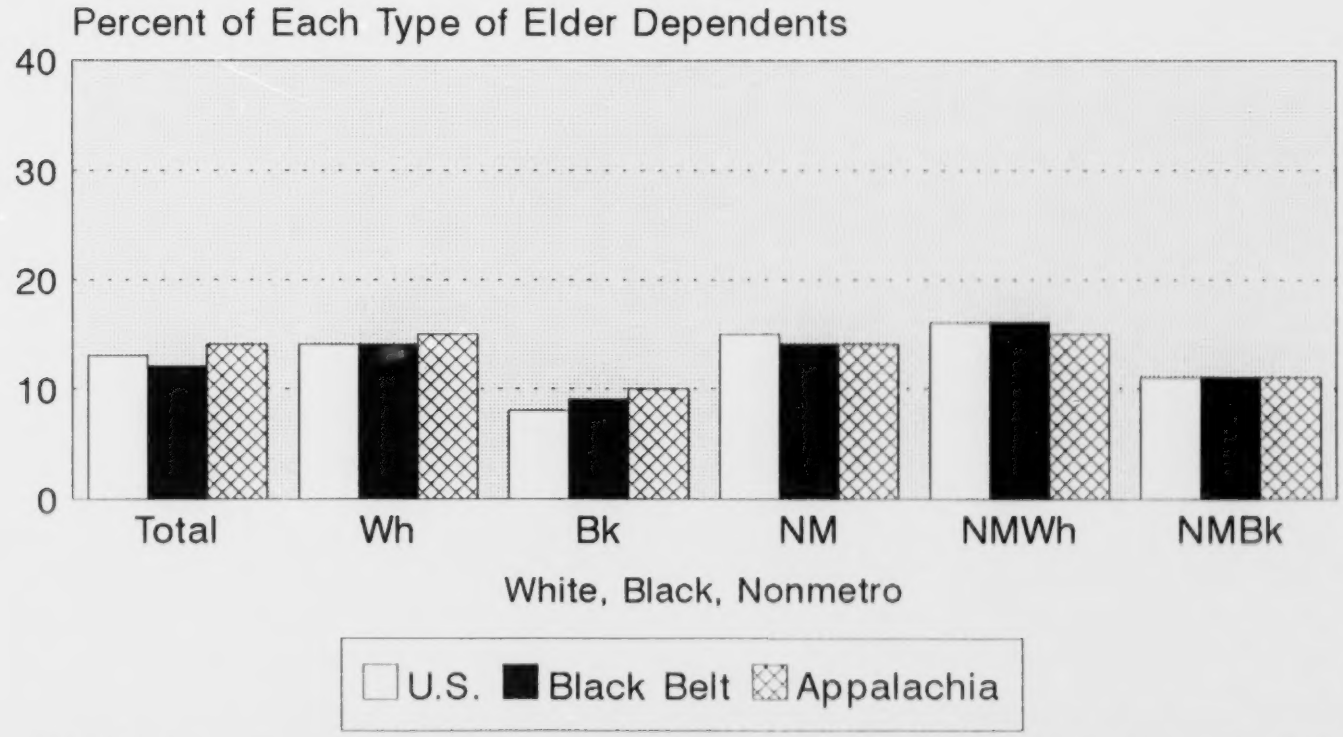
White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

[b]The bases for the percentages of total, elder, and youth age-dependents are the total population, all whites, or all blacks. This also applies to each region and each metro/nonmetro subpopulation.

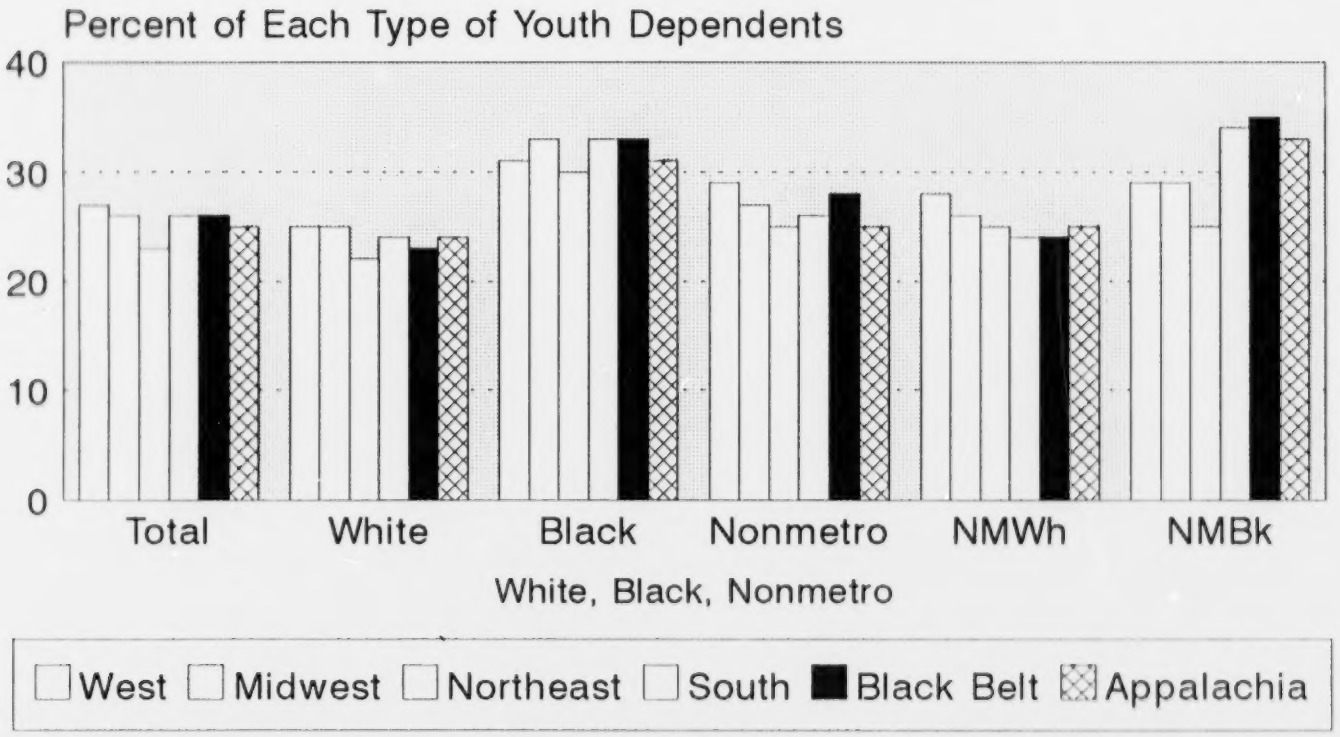
[c]Interpret as follows: 38.1 percent of the U.S. population consists of elder and youth age-dependents; 14.0 percent of the southern whites are elder age dependents; 33.4 percent of the Black-Belt blacks are youth age-dependents; etc.

Figure 30. Percent of Elder Dependents Within the U.S., Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Figure 31. Percent Of Youth Dependents Within the U.S., Black Belt, and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 border counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Shares of Elders and Youths Across U.S. Regions

Age-related dependence is typically distributed across the regions and subregions in proportion to the sizes of their populations. As anticipated from the South's overall 34 percent of the total population, the South has slightly over one-third of the nation's elders and youths (Table 15; Figures 32-36). Also, the South has essentially the same portion of the country's elders as it has of the U.S. youths. The Northeast has proportionately more of the U.S. elders than it does of youths, while the Midwest and West lean toward larger shares of the nation's youths.

Ratios, percentages, and counts. Whereas ratios and percentages are two techniques for standardizing a region's dependence for regional population sizes (Tables 13 and 14), percentages of the old and the young who live in each region (Table 15) show the unstandardized distributions of elder and youth populations. While ratios show contrasts and similarities in such impoverished places as the Black Belt and Appalachia, the numerical and percentage shares indicate the regions where the bulk of a subpopulation's age-dependents are found.

For example, Appalachia's elder dependence ratio of 23 is notably higher than the Black Belt's elder ratio of 19 (Table 13). However, the Black Belt contains 5.4 million elder dependents; Appalachia has just 3.0 million. Another example is that both the South and the Midwest have black youth dependence ratios of 56 (Table 13). However, there are 5.2 million black youth dependents in the South as compared to the Midwest's 1.9 million. Such numerical differences can be noted for many ratios when comparing across regions or subpopulations.

Given the South and Black Belt's large populations, large nonmetro populations, and large populations of African-Americans, the South claims large numbers of the nation's demographic dependents. Nowhere is this more apparent than among southern, black, nonmetro youths. This coincides with many other indicators of impoverishment. Efforts to develop rural communities and regions must take the burdens of dependence and services for dependent populations into account.

Table 15. Total, Elder, and Youth Age-Dependents, Across Regions[a]

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	94,846,263	31,241,831	63,604,432	75,480,202	27,851,973	47,628,229	12,092,966	2,508,551	9,584,414
Northeast	%	19.9%[b]	22.4%	18.7%	20.8%	23.0%	19.5%	17.5%	18.1%	17.3%
(217)	N	18,908,163	6,995,156	11,913,007	15,680,753	6,409,025	9,271,728	2,111,271	454,809	1,656,462
Midwest	%	24.6%	24.8%	24.5%	26.8%	25.9%	27.4%	19.5%	18.9	19.7%
(1,055)	N	23,363,913	7,749,130	15,614,783	20,233,623	7,205,491	13,028,132	2,363,609	474,957	1,888,652
West	%	20.9%	18.5%	22.1%	19.8%	18.2%	20.7%	8.8%	7.7%	9.1%
(444)	N	19,841,627	5,773,363	14,068,264	14,928,296	5,065,409	9,862,887	1,065,085	192,610	872,475
South	%	34.5%	34.3%	34.6%	32.6%	32.9%[b]	32.5%	54.2%	55.3%	53.9%
(1,425)	N	32,732,560	10,724,182	22,008,378	24,637,530	9,172,048	15,465,482	6,553,001	1,386,175	5,166,826
Black Belt	%	18.2%	17.3%	18.6%	15.2%	15.4%	15.1%	42.2%	42.2%	42.2%[b]
(623)	N	17,247,402	5,418,326	11,829,076	11,475,876	4,297,450	7,178,426	5,102,218	1,059,556	4,042,662
Appalachia	%	8.5%	9.5%	8.0%	9.7%	10.0%	9.5%	5.2%	6.3%	4.9%
(404)	N	8,023,173	2,955,828	5,067,345	7,325,614	2,791,601	4,534,013	628,481	157,218	471,263

See notes at end of table.

Table 15. Continued: Metro Age-Dependents, Across Regions

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	74,023,479	23,826,012	50,197,467	57,501,891	21,031,974	36,469,917	10,157,203	2,034,704	8,122,499
Northeast	%	23.1%	26.6%	21.5%	24.2%	27.4%	22.4%	20.6%	22.2%	20.2%
(217)	N	17,129,125	6,342,412	10,786,713	13,940,378	5,761,685	8,178,693	2,091,261	451,354	1,639,907
Midwest	%	22.4%	21.8%	22.7%	23.8%	22.3%	24.6%	22.4%	22.4%	22.4%
(1,055)	N	16,576,667	5,201,640	11,375,027	13,678,213	4,691,509	8,986,704	2,272,781	455,162	1,817,619
West	%	22.7%	20.3%	23.8%	21.5%	20.0%	22.3%	10.3%	9.3%	10.5%
(444)	N	16,782,169	4,837,495	11,944,674	12,340,304	4,198,575	8,141,729	1,041,814	188,848	852,966
South	%	31.8%	31.2%	32.1%	30.5%	30.3%	30.6%	46.8%	46.2%	46.9%
(1,425)	N	23,535,518	7,444,465	16,091,053	17,542,996	6,380,205	11,162,791	4,751,347	939,340	3,812,007
Black Belt	%	17.4%	16.6%	17.8%	15.3%	15.4%	15.2%	34.8%	33.3%	35.1%
(623)	N	12,897,201	3,959,052	8,938,149	8,771,544	3,229,336	5,542,208	3,531,107	677,319	2,853,788
Appalachia	%	6.2%	7.2%	5.8%	7.1%	7.6%	6.9%	4.4%	5.5%	4.1%
(404)	N	4,598,681	1,712,404	2,886,277	4,107,784	1,597,123	2,510,661	446,518	111,232	335,286

See notes at end of table.

Table 15. Continued: Nonmetro Age-Dependents, Across Regions

Region		All Races			White			Black		
(N Counties)		Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth	Total	Elder	Youth
U.S.	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(3,141)	N	20,822,784	7,415,819	13,406,965	17,978,311	6,819,999	11,158,312	1,935,763	473,847	1,461,916
Northeast	%	8.5%	8.8%	8.4%	9.7%	9.5%	9.8%	1.0%	0.7%	1.1%
(217)	N	1,779,038	652,744	1,126,294	1,740,375	647,340	1,093,035	20,010	3,455	16,555
Midwest	%	32.6%	34.4%	31.6%	36.5%	36.9%	36.2%	4.7%	4.2%	4.9%
(1,055)	N	6,787,246	2,547,490	4,239,756	6,555,410	2,513,982	4,041,428	90,828	19,795	71,033
West	%	14.7%	12.6%	15.8%	14.4%	12.7%	15.4%	1.2%	0.8%	1.3%
(444)	N	3,059,458	935,868	2,123,590	2,587,992	866,834	1,721,158	23,271	3,762	19,509
South	%	44.2%	44.2%	44.1%	39.5%	40.9%	38.6%	93.1%	94.3%	92.7%
(1,425)	N	9,197,042	3,279,717	5,917,325	7,094,534	2,791,843	4,302,691	1,801,654	446,835	1,354,819
Black Belt	%	20.9%	19.7%	21.6%	15.0%	15.7%	14.7%	81.2%	80.7%	81.3%
(623)	N	4,350,201	1,459,274	2,890,927	2,704,332	1,068,114	1,636,218	1,571,111	382,237	1,188,874
Appalachia	%	16.4%	16.8%	16.3%	17.9%	17.5%	18.1%	9.4%	9.7%	9.3%
(404)	N	3,424,492	1,243,424	2,181,068	3,217,830	1,194,478	2,023,352	181,963	45,986	135,977

See notes on the following page.

Notes for Table 15 (also see Figures 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36):

[a]In this, "...Across Regions," table, the **totals** for the U.S. and subpopulations in the top row consist of the column sums of the northeastern, midwestern, western, and southern census regions.

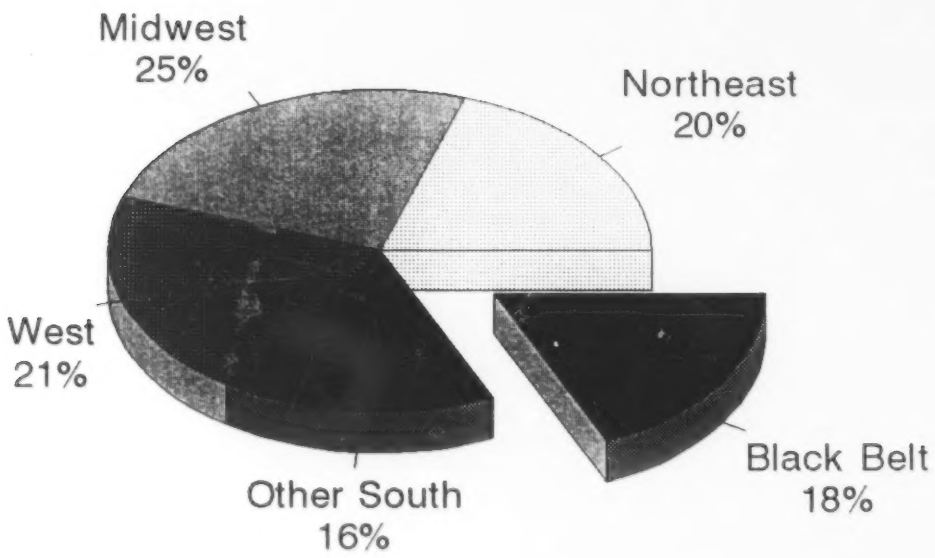
The **Black Belt** is a subregion of the South. **Appalachia** is a subregion of the South, Northeast, and Midwest. Furthermore, the Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties: 18 in Alabama, 17 in Mississippi, 4 in Georgia, 4 in South Carolina, 2 in Virginia, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee.

White and Black do not represent all the races included in the total column. Therefore, white and black do not sum to 100.0 percent of the total population.

Metro/nonmetro counties are based on the 1993 OMB designations. As reported here, counties with any metro population are metro.

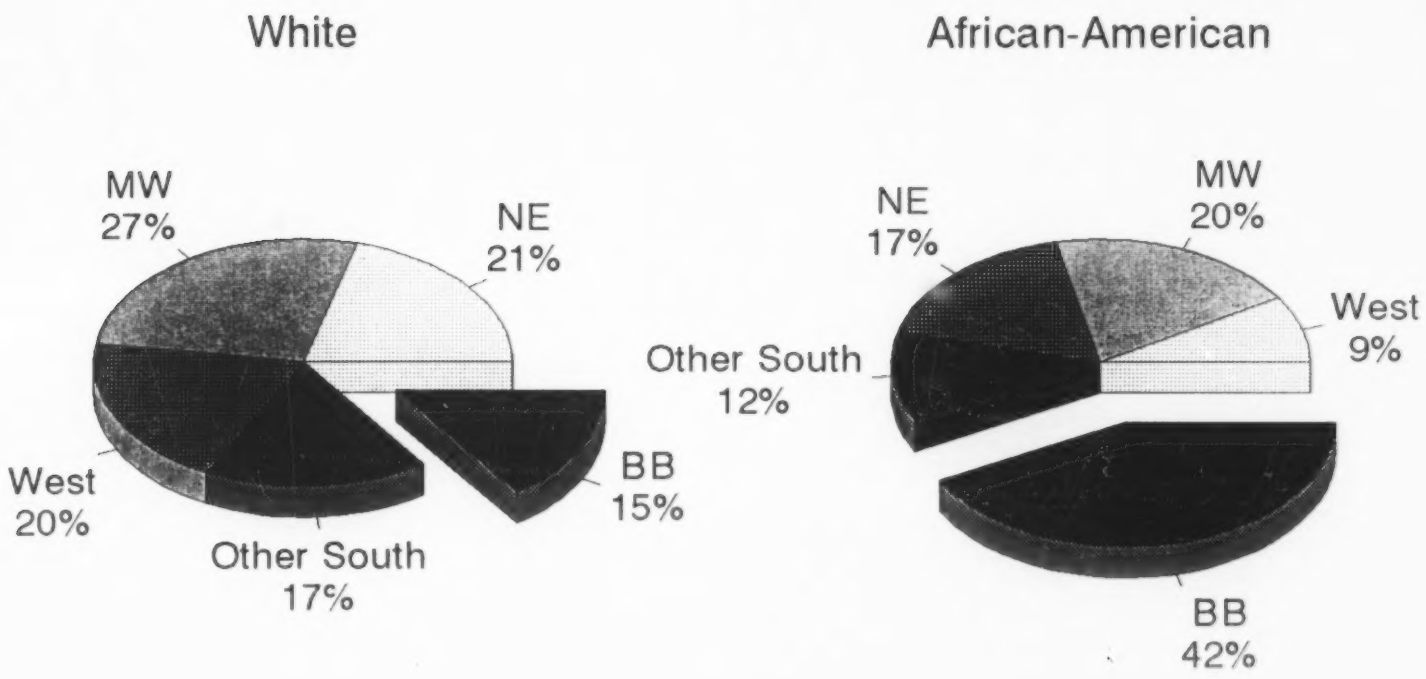
[b]Interpret as follows: 19.9 percent of the total elder and youth age-dependents live in the Northeast; 32.9 percent of the white elder age-dependents live in the South; 42.2 percent of the black youth age-dependents live in the Black Belt; etc.

Figure 32. Age-Dependents Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



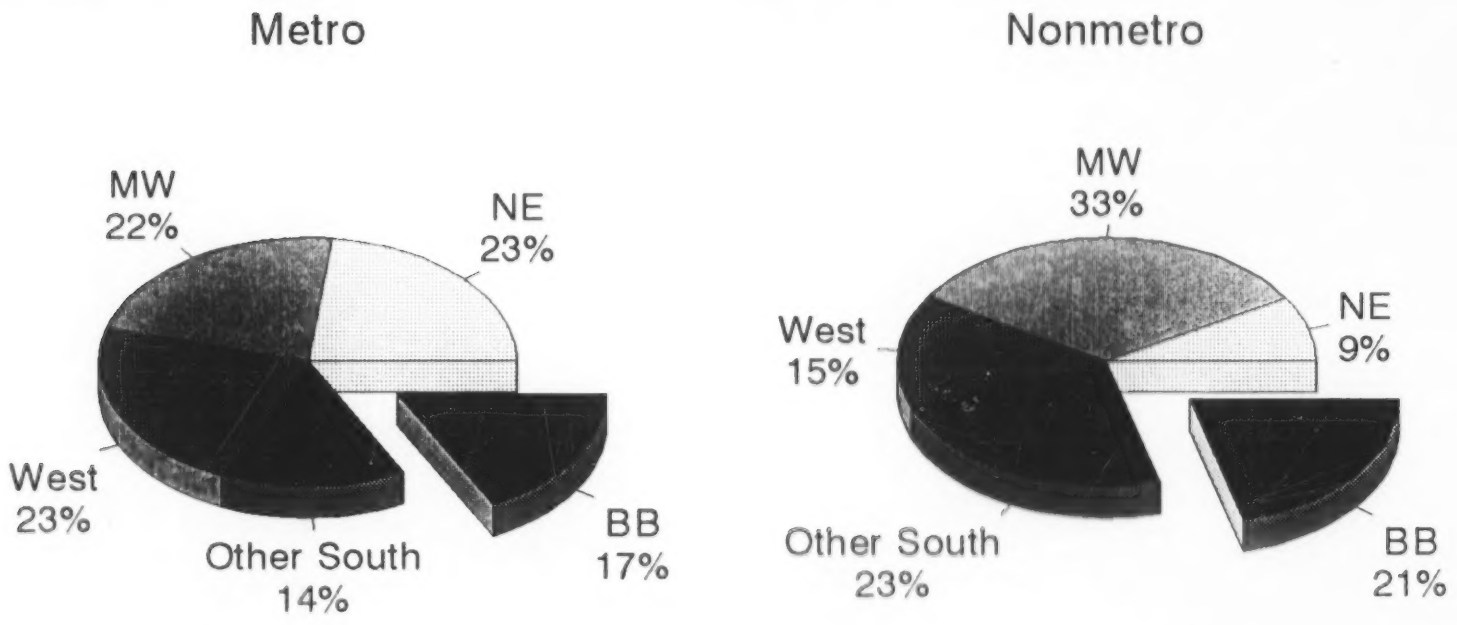
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. U.S. age-dependents in millions: U.S. 94.8, West 19.8, MW 23.4, NE 18.9, South 32.7, Black Belt 17.2.

Figure 33. White and Black Age-Dependents Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



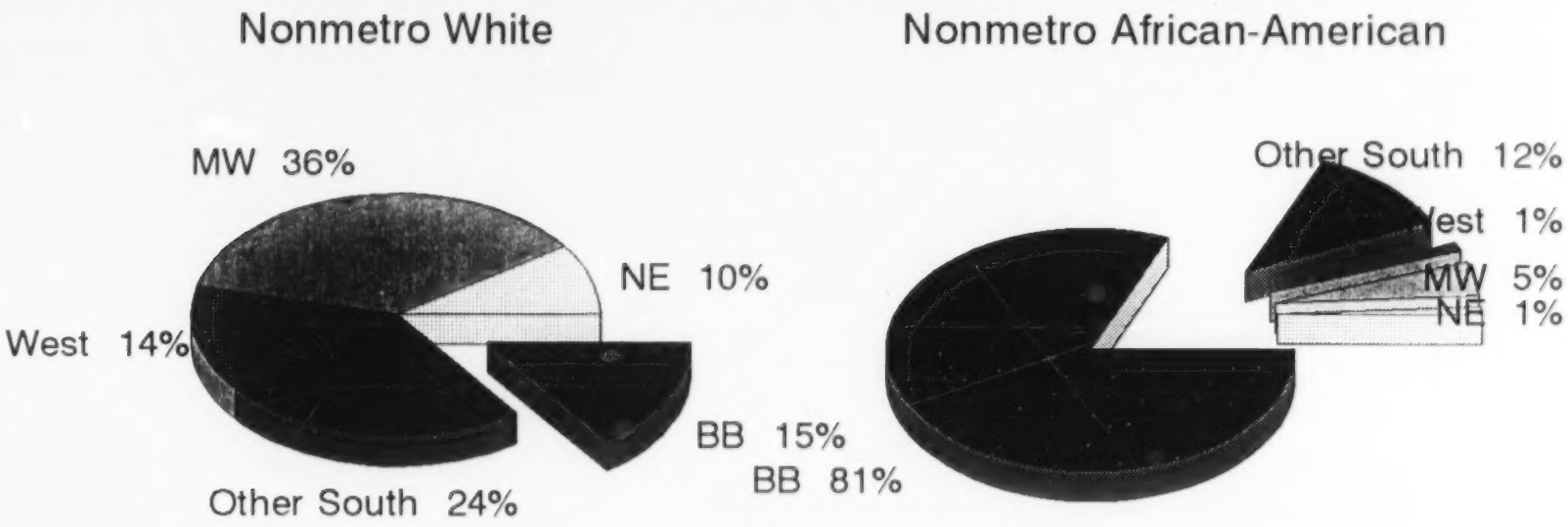
Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris.
In millions, white age-dependents: U.S. 75.5, West 14.9, MW 20.2, NE 15.7, South 24.6, Black Belt 11.5. Black: U.S. 12.1, West 1.1, MW 2.4, NE 2.1, South 6.6, Black Belt 5.1.

Figure 34. Metro and Nonmetro Age-Dependents Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



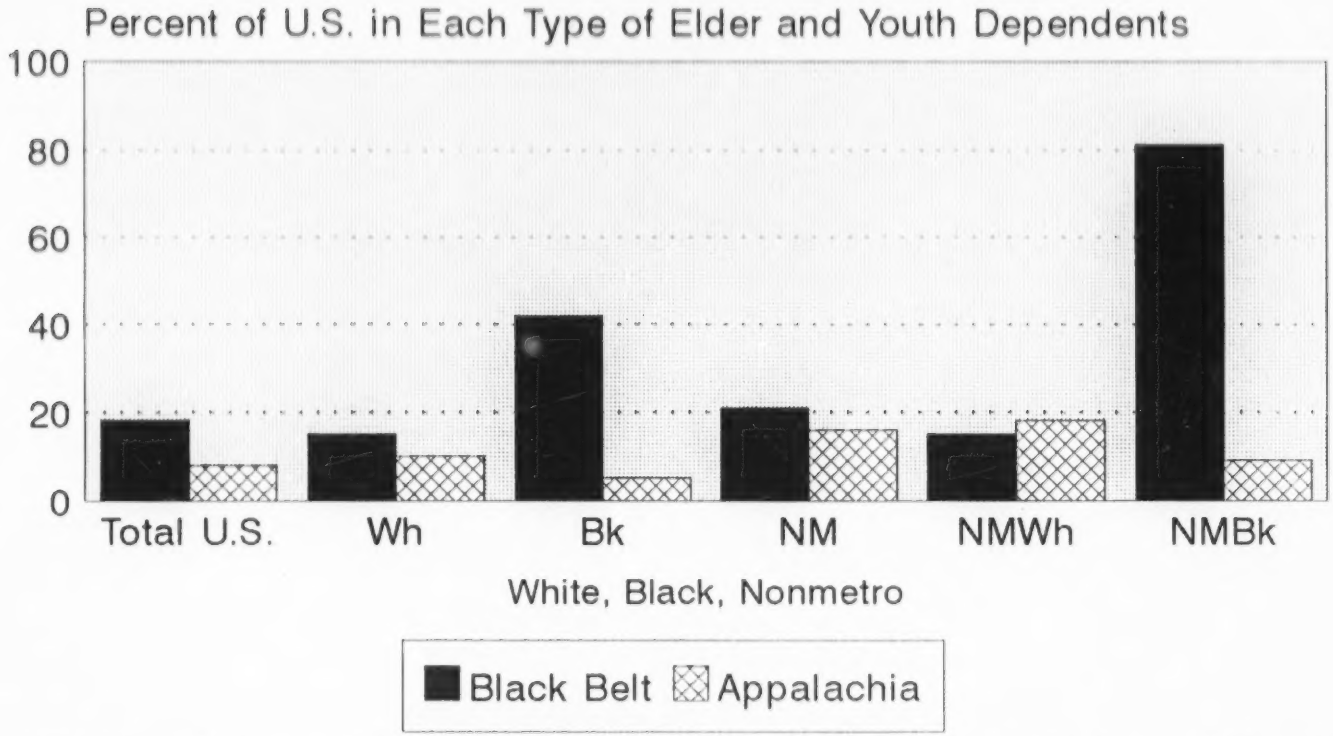
Source: 1990 U.S Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. In millions, metro age-dependents.: U.S. 74.0, West 16.8, MW 16.6, NE 17.1, South 23.5, Black Belt 12.9. Nonmetro: U.S. 20.8, West 3.1, MW 6.8, NE 1.8, South 9.2, Black Belt 4.4. Totals do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 35. Nonmetro White and Black Age-Dependents Across the South, Black Belt, and Other Regions



Source: 1990 U.S. Census. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. In millions, NM wh. age-dependents: U.S. 17.98, West 2.59, MW 6.56, NE 1.74, South 7.09, Black Belt 2.70. NM black: U.S. 1.94, West .02, MW .09, NE .02, South 1.80, Black Belt 1.57. NM white total <100% due to rounding.

Figure 36. Elder and Youth Dependents Across the Black Belt and Appalachia



Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1993 OMB metro codes. Compiled by Wimberley and Morris. The South includes the Black Belt and much of Appalachia. The Black Belt and Appalachian subregions overlap in 47 counties mainly in AL and MS but also in GA, SC, VA, NC, and TN.

Part VII
Conclusions

This report provides basic, reference information describing several important factors in quality of life—populations, race, rurality, poverty, education, unemployment, and dependence—for major regions and subregions of the United States. Of particular concern have been the South, the Black Belt, and Appalachia where many poor quality-of-life conditions are concentrated at their highest rates and in their largest national shares.

Poverty. The poverty rates—the percentage of people who are poor—are notably higher in the South than in the Northeast, Midwest, or West. And in each of the other major regions, the percentage share of the nation's poor is about half or less of what it is in the South.

The South has 34 percent of the U.S. population and 41 percent of the nation's poverty. It has 45 percent of the nonmetro population and 55 percent of the nonmetro poverty. The region has 53 percent of the nation's African-Americans and 57 percent of the ones who live in poverty. The South has 91 percent of the nonmetro blacks and 95 percent of their nonmetro poverty.

These disparities observed for the South as a whole are intensified in the 623 Black Belt counties of the South. The Black Belt's poverty rate is the highest in the country; it is higher than that of any major U.S. region or Appalachia. The Black Belt leads the nation in poverty rates for African-Americans, metro and nonmetro residents in general, and especially for nonmetro blacks. Only among nonmetro whites does Appalachia have a higher poverty rate than the Black Belt.

The historic Black Belt accounts for 18 percent of the U.S. population but 23 percent of the nation's poverty. The Black Belt has 40 percent of the black population and 47 percent of the all African-American poverty. It has 21 percent of the nation's nonmetro people and 28 percent of the nonmetro poverty. And, the Black Belt has 79 percent of the nonmetro blacks and 84 percent of the corresponding poverty. Whether for the general population, for African-Americans, for nonmetro residents, or for nonmetro African-Americans, U.S. poverty concentrates more heavily in the Black Belt South than in any region of the country.

High school graduation. Similar circumstances for the South and Black Belt can be described for regional rates and national shares of those not graduating from high school. The highest rates of not graduating occur in the Black Belt, Appalachia, and the South in general. The highest rate for any of the subpopulations analyzed is for the Black Belt's nonmetro blacks; 54 percent have not completed high school. Appalachia has the highest rates for whites and it reaches 37 percent in nonmetro areas.

The extent of failure to graduate from high school in the South parallels the shares of poverty found in the South within a percentage point. Furthermore, the South has a 40 percent share of all who do not graduate, a 58 percent share of the blacks who do not finish, a 55 percent share of the nonmetro nongraduates, and a 94 percent share of the nonmetro blacks who do not graduate.

In the Black Belt, the high school graduation pattern also shadows within two points the shares of poverty. In the South, the Black Belt, and in Appalachia, the shares not graduating are disproportionately larger than their shares of the nation's population.

Unemployment. While unemployment rates for the South and Black Belt are about the same as those for other regions, black and nonmetro black unemployment rates are worse in every region and subregion. However, the Midwest distinguishes itself with the worst unemployment rates for blacks and its small base of nonmetro blacks, as does Appalachia for nonmetro whites.

But as surmised earlier, we suspect that employment conditions in the South and Black Belt have implications for quality of life that are not adequately reflected in their unemployment rates and regional shares. Due to the shortage of education and the scarcity of jobs, many may be discouraged and therefore no longer officially included in the potential labor force, employed or not.

Furthermore, underemployment may be worse in the South. Although many in the South and Black Belt are employed, they are the working poor. In the face of its poverty and lack of high school completion, the anomaly of the South's modest unemployment rates is open to further study through data beyond that analyzed here.

For whatever reasons, the unemployment rates for white southerners are the lowest of any region. Remarkably, in the Black Belt the 4.6 percent unemployment rate for whites is the lowest of any region or subregion.

Dependence. Dependence is a recent addition to the study of regional quality of life. In aggregate, age-dependence ratios for the South and Black Belt resemble those of the nation. Below the surface, however, interesting differences appear among subpopulations. Nonmetro dependence ratios run higher than the metro ratios, and African-American dependence ratios—driven by youths—are higher than those for whites. As noted, region, race, and rurality converge to show differences in dependence that correspond to differences in poverty and education.

Specifically, poverty and high school graduate rates are worse in the South and Black Belt where nonmetro black dependence ratios are especially high. We have examined this finding elsewhere through correlation and regression analyses (Wimberley and Morris 1995) and suggest that, although neglected, the issues of dependence are important for further research and for rural and human resource development efforts in the Black Belt and South.

A visible Black Belt South. Many have called attention to the problems associated with race and rurality, but few seem to recognize the difference made by region. This analysis demonstrates that the South and its Black Belt have disproportionately large shares of the nation's poor quality-of-life conditions for three general reasons.

First, this region and subregion contain large populations. The South has over one-third of the U.S. population and is growing. Taken alone and apart from the larger South, the Black Belt nearly matches the populous northeastern United States.

Second, rates for poverty, low educational attainment, and the like do not spread evenly across the nation's regions and demographic sectors. The South and Black Belt are home to nonmetro and racial subpopulations that suffer the worst rates for socioeconomic conditions.

Third, the high rates and the large subpopulations at risk compound, or interact, to produce disproportionately large concentrations of poor socioeconomic conditions in the South and Black Belt.

The findings show that southern region, race, and rurality are associated with American impoverishment. Combined, these factors signal an ongoing crisis in quality of life not only for this historic rural region, but also a longstanding problem that affects the nation as a whole.

To improve quality of life in the United States, the problems must be visible and recognized. Solutions must be focused where the nation's impoverishment is concentrated. As documented here, the primary region of poor quality-of-life conditions is the South and its nonmetropolitan areas. Not only are these problems atypically southern and nonmetropolitan, they fall disproportionately among African-Americans—the nation's largest racial minority—and are concentrated together in the Black Belt.

Just because a place is southern, rural, or Black Belt does not mean that its poor conditions should be passively accepted as a matter of course. There are problems to be addressed in all regions. Yet, the extraordinary concentration of southern and Black Belt impoverishment often goes unmentioned if not unrecognized by those who study quality of life, by those who write national and regional policies, and by those who devise rural development programs of one kind or another.

We hope this study of regional well-being has helped to make the South and particularly the Black Belt more visible as the nation's largest and most impoverished rural areas. To improve the quality of life in the South and the Black Belt will require a major effort. But the case for focusing regional research, policy, and program efforts on the historically poor conditions of the Black Belt and South is all too obvious to ignore.

References

Gray, Benjamin
1994 *An Analysis of the Working Poor in Nonmetropolitan Areas of North Carolina*. Master's Thesis, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

Lichter, Daniel T.
1989 "Race, Employment Hardship, and Inequality in the American Nonmetropolitan South." *American Sociological Review* 54 (No. 3): 436-446.

Lichter, Daniel T., and Janice A. Costanzo
1987 "Nonmetropolitan Underemployment and Labor-Force Composition." *Rural Sociology* 52 (No. 3): 329-344.

Moland, John, Jr.
1981 "The Black Population." Pp. 464-501 in Amos H. Hawley and Sara M. Mazie, Eds., *Nonmetropolitan America in Transition*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Morris, Libby V.
1994 "Dependence in the Rural South." *Southern Rural Sociology* 10 (No. 1): 115-130.

Morris, Libby V., and Ronald C. Wimberley
1994 "Measuring Dependence in Children and Elder Populations in the United States." Paper presented at the meeting of the World Congress of Sociology, International Sociological Association, Bielefeld, Germany, July.

Morris, Libby V., and Ronald C. Wimberley
1997 "Dependence." Forthcoming in *Encyclopedia of Rural America*, Gary A. Goreham, Ed. New York: Garland Press.

Office of Management and Budget
1993 Revised Statistical Definitions for Metropolitan Areas. OMB Bulletin No. 93-17. Washington, D.C.: Office of Management and Budget, June.

Thompson, Alton, and Benjamin Gray
1995 "The Substantive Utility of the Dual Labor Market and Human Capital Theories: A Block Recursive Model of the Rural Labor Force." Unpublished manuscript. Greensboro: Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, North Carolina A&T State University.

U.S. Bureau of the Census
1992a *General Population of the United States: 1990.* CP-1-1. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Bureau of the Census
1992b *1990 Census of Population and Housing: Summary of Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics, United States.* CPH-5-1. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Bureau of the Census
1995 *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1995.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Bureau of the Census
1996 "Population Estimates and Change." *Census and You.* 31 (No. 3): 10.

Wimberley, Ronald C.
1995 "What's Rural?" *Community and Rural Development News Capsules.* 1 (No. 1): 3. Raleigh: North Carolina State University.

Wimberley, Ronald C., and Libby V. Morris
1994 "Black Belt Counties: A Challenge for the Land-Grant System." Pp. 63-74 in Robert Zabawa, Ntam Baharanyi, and Walter Hill, Eds., *Challenges in Agriculture and Rural Development.* Tuskegee, Alabama: Tuskegee University.

Wimberley, Ronald C., and Libby V. Morris
1995 "Dependence as a Factor in Socioeconomic Well-Being: the U.S., the South, the Black Belt." Paper presented at the meetings of the Rural Sociological Society, Pentagon City, Virginia, August.

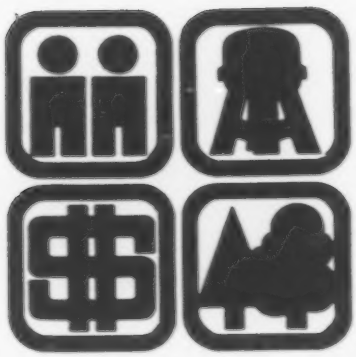
Wimberley, Ronald C., and Libby V. Morris
1997 *The Southern Black Belt: Dependence, Quality of Life, and Policy.* Monograph. Forthcoming.

Wimberley, Ronald C., Libby V. Morris, and Douglas C. Bachtel
1991 "Agricultural and Life Conditions in the Land-Grant Black Belt: Past, Present, and Policy Questions." Pp. 33-48 in Ntam Baharanyi, Robert Zabawa, Audrey Maretzki, and Walter Hill, Eds., *Public and Private Partnership for Rural Development*. Tuskegee, Alabama: Tuskegee University.

Wimberley, Ronald C., Libby V. Morris, and Douglas C. Bachtel
1992 "New Developments in the Black Belt: Dependency and Life Conditions." Pp. 77-84 in Ntam Baharanyi, Robert Zabawa, and Walter Hill, Eds., *New Dimensions in Local and Rural Development*. Tuskegee, Alabama: Tuskegee University.

Wimberley, Ronald C., Libby V. Morris, and Douglas C. Bachtel
1996 *The Southern Black Belt in National Perspective*. Poster and map. Raleigh: North Carolina State University. Forthcoming.

The SRDC is one of four regional rural development centers in the nation. It coordinates cooperation between the Research (Experiment Station) and Extension (Cooperative Extension Service) staffs at land-grant institutions in the South to provide technical consultation, research, training, and evaluation services for rural development. For more information about SRDC activities and publications, write to the Director.



Southern Rural Development Center
Box 9656
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, handicap/disability, or veteran status.

Publication No. 203 **November 1996**